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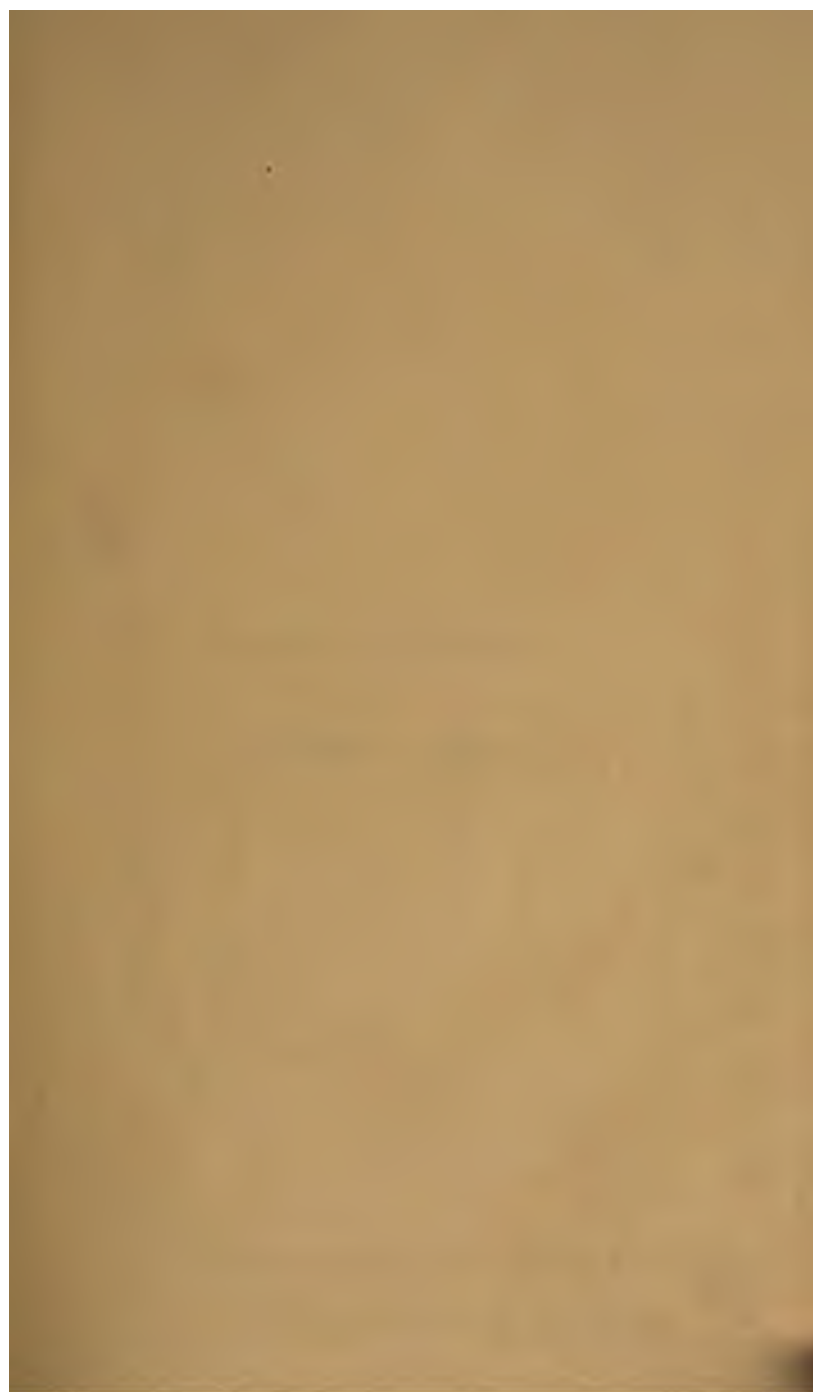




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LIGHTS AND SHADOWS
OF
LONDON LIFE.

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

OF

LONDON LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LORDS AND COMMONS,"
"THE GREAT METROPOLIS," &c. &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1842.



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CHAPTER X.

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IN one of my publications which appeared periodically some time ago, I devoted a chapter to the begging impostors of the metropolis. As that work, for the form in which it was pub-

lished, and the class of persons by whom it was principally, if not exclusively read, is not likely to have fallen into the hands of those among whom this work will chiefly circulate; I shall make use of the greater part of the information therein contained, in the present chapter.

London is proverbial all the world over for the number and ingenuity of the tricks which are daily practised in it; but perhaps there is no department of metropolitan roguery in which a greater amount of ingenuity is displayed than in that of begging.

The London beggars are divided into a great variety of classes: but I shall confine myself to the begging impostors who ply their avocation by means of letters, and to those who by an assumption of distress which they do not actually feel, endeavour, in the open streets, to enlist the sympathies of the charitable and humane in their behalf.

It is exceedingly difficult to obtain statistical information so copious as could be desired, respecting the begging-letter class of impostors. I have been at great pains to possess myself of

as full and accurate particulars as are accessible. If I have not succeeded to the extent of my own wishes as regards the copiousness of my facts, I have great reason for reposing an implicit reliance on the accuracy of those I have ascertained.

I need hardly say, that it is impossible to ascertain what may be the average number of persons in the metropolis who make a trade of writing begging-letters. There can be no question that hundreds do so who are either never detected in the practice, or who, if they are so by some of the individuals on whom they have sought to impose, are never publicly exposed; of course, therefore, their names are unknown. A guess, however, may be made at the number of these persons. The great majority of them confine their attempts at deception to the nobility and gentry. The reason is obvious enough. They know, in the first place, that the aristocracy are so much occupied with other matters, that they are less likely than the middle classes of society to put themselves to the trouble, in the event of any suspicion of

attempted imposition, of detecting and prosecuting the offenders. In the second place, they know that, while the chances of detection are less with the nobility and the more affluent portion of the gentry, than with persons in an humbler sphere of life, they will necessarily, in the event of success, reap a much more abundant harvest from the former than from the latter. Half-a-crown, or five shillings, even were their tale of distress believed, would be all that they could, taking one case with another, expect to receive from persons in the middle ranks of life ; whereas, with the aristocracy they never dream of a successful effort being productive of less than a sovereign ; while the average produce, from calculations I have made, and which they, as a matter of course, have made long before me, is about fifty shillings.

Assuming, then, as before stated, that the vast majority of persons who follow the avocation of writing and sending letters soliciting charity under cover of got-up cases of distress, confine their business to the higher classes, I am enabled by means of data which are in my possession,

to form something like a confident conjecture as to the average number of such impostors. Some time ago I saw a letter from a nobleman of a very humane and benevolent disposition, in which it was stated that, in the course of the year, he had received nearly three hundred and fifty begging-letters, all of which were dated from London, and detailed trumped-up cases of the deepest distress. The noble lord, before remitting any amount of money in answer to either of the letters, took the precaution, which he had been led to do from having been so often imposed on before, of inquiring into the individual cases. And what does the reader suppose was the result? Why that forty-nine out of every fifty of the parties were arrant impostors. Now, as these persons are, for the most part, men of great shrewdness, it is a fair presumption that they would take care to ascertain who were the noblemen to whom they might apply with the greatest prospect of success; and consequently, that the nobleman to whom I refer was not likely to be overlooked by many of them. In all the circumstances, therefore, I

think I cannot be far from the mark, when I suppose the average number of those who live by begging-letter impositions to be about two hundred and fifty.

Another question will very naturally be asked—What is the probable amount per annum which is averaged by the begging-letter impostors? If I cannot answer the question with an absolute certainty, I have facts in my possession which enable me to speak with confidence as to what constitutes an approximation to the sum. The highest which any one of the late fraternity was in the habit of yearly deriving from his impositions, was very nearly 1000*l*. This may appear an incredible sum; the fact is nevertheless as I have stated. I shall have occasion to refer to the case more particularly in an after part of the chapter. The lowest sum earned by any of the supposed two hundred and fifty begging-letter impostors, cannot be under 100*l*. a-year. Many of their number earn upwards of 300*l*. From the calculations I have made, I should suppose that if the average sum were estimated at the intermediate sum of 200*l*.

we should come pretty near the mark. This, then, would give no less than 50,000*l.*, out of which the benevolent public of London, chiefly the nobility, are annually swindled by the begging-letter impostors.

I have been at some pains to ascertain the probable number of begging-letters which are, on an average, daily addressed to noblemen, gentlemen, and ladies in the metropolis. To speak with anything like certainty on the subject were, of course, out of the question. From all the facts I have been able to learn, I should suppose that there must be at least, speaking in round numbers, 1000-such letters written every day by these impostors. Those who confine themselves to what they call the higher game, namely, the nobility and affluent gentry, do not deal to a great extent in epistles of this description, not only because the field is comparatively limited, but also because if they succeed in one case out of five, they reap a rich harvest; seldom receiving less than two sovereigns; in many instances five; in some ten; and occasionally, though very rarely, as high as twenty. But in

my computation of the probable number of begging-letters written daily in London, I include the class of impostors who chiefly, if not exclusively, confine their labours to epistolary applications to clergymen, dissenting ministers, and other persons of known benevolence, in the middle ranks of life. Instances consist with my own personal knowledge of an individual of this last class of impostors, writing no fewer than twenty of these letters in a day. Not long ago, sixteen letters of this description, all sealed and ready for delivery, were found in a basket at the house of one of these persons, in Blackfriars Road; and it was ascertained that all the sixteen had been intended to be forwarded to their respective destinations within a few hours after the discovery. If then some of these rogues are so indefatigable in their epistolary attempts on the pockets of the charitable and humane, as to pen twenty letters in one day, surely, considering their number, and making every allowance for the comparatively contracted labours of the least industrious portion of the swindling community, there is nothing extravagant in the

supposition, that 1000 such letters are daily indited and forwarded to their several destinations in London.

As to the average proportion the successful bear to the unsuccessful applications in such cases, I have no data on which to ground even a confident conjecture. The comparative success in individual cases depends, as a matter of course, on the dexterity of the parties. To insure distinguished success as a begging-letter impostor, two things are indispensable; first, judgment in the selection of the persons on whose pockets the attempt is to be made; and secondly, skill or ingenuity in deciding on the form or mode of making it. These are just as necessary to success in this way, as the choice of a proper place and a skilful baiting of the hook, are to success in angling for any species of the finny tribe. The difference in the comparative success of the begging-letter impostors is very great; some do not succeed in above one case out of twenty; others successfully practise their impositions every fifth time they make the attempt. I believe that this last measure of

success is the greatest that any of them are known to have met with.

It will appear, on the first blush of the thing, incredible, but the fact has in various cases been established beyond all question, that some of the more successful begging-letter writers keep their clerks, and sport their horses and gigs. This was the case with blind Williams, so well known in town some years ago. It was ascertained at the time, that his annual income, from his begging-epistles, averaged from 600*l.* to 800*l.* He regularly employed two clerks, at a salary of 80*l.* a-year, in the one case, and 50*l.* in the other. He likewise kept his horse and gig, and might often be seen "showing off" in the most fashionable parts of the town. He kept his mistress also, and on his death, his principal clerk, Joseph Underwood, of whom I shall have to speak hereafter, actually married her, regarding the printed documents and business materials of her late "protector" as equivalent to a fortune. The other clerk of Williams also afterwards established a profitable business, on his own account, in the begging-letter way;

but it was not equal to that of his late employer.

A common practice in the begging-letter business is, for a number of impostors to enter into a sort of partnership together, it being found that the trade can generally be carried on most successfully that way. In such cases, however, they do not all "share-and-share alike." The company, if I may so speak, is formed on the banditti principle; in other words, they have always a head who acts in the capacity of a general, and all their movements or "operations," as they themselves phrase it, must be in strict conformity with his instructions. The late notorious Peter Hill, whose case was brought so prominently before the public fifteen or sixteen years since, was the head of one of these companies or gangs. It was ascertained, beyond all question, at the period to which I refer, that the average amount of which the charitable public were daily plundered by the impositions of Peter and his gang, was upwards of 20*l*. His own share, after paying all the subordinates, or his "men," as he used to call them,

and after making deductions for expenses in the shape of paper, postage, &c., was not much under 600*l.* a-year.

Of all the begging-letter impostors of whom I have heard, Peter was unrivalled in the facility and success with which he could change his personal appearance. In the course of one day he could assume and sustain with admirable effect, seven or eight different characters; so that those who saw him, and were conversing with him, at ten o'clock in the morning, might have been in his company at twelve, and never had the slightest suspicion of the fact. He had a pair of huge artificial whiskers, which he put on and cast off just as he pleased; and he had also a pair of moveable mustachios, which a Spanish Don would have looked on with envious eye. Of wigs, too, he had an abundant supply, embracing every variety of colour; while his wardrobe was so extensive, that you would have thought he had purchased the entire contents of some Jew clothesman's shop in Holywell Street. By these means, coupled with great natural cleverness, he was able to assume so many dif-

ferent characters, and to appear so very unlike himself (if there be not an Irishism in the expression), that, though the Mendicity Society had at one time no fewer than three hundred cases of begging-letter impostures against him, and though its officers had repeatedly seen him in the police offices, they passed him day after day in the public streets, without recognising him. I may mention one fact, out of hundreds, illustrative of the singular adroitness with which he managed to disguise himself, and to assume different characters; namely, that he applied personally one morning to the Earl of Harrowby, in the capacity of an unbeneficed clergyman of the Church of England, in great distress, when he received a sovereign; and in the evening, in the capacity of an unfortunate portrait-painter, when he received a second sovereign from the hands of the noble earl, and this too after having had a personal interview with his lordship on both occasions.

The notorious Underwood, who was brought so prominently before the public seven or eight years ago, under innumerable aliases, was also

the head or general of a gang of this description. He is the impostor to whom I have before alluded as having netted about 1000*l.* per annum as his own share of the partnership plunder. He also kept his gig, and retained the services of a private clerk at a handsome salary. Underwood made one of the most successful single hits ever known, perhaps, in the annals of the begging-letter profession. Not many years since, he swindled the late Earl of Plymouth out of 50*l.* by one letter. I know several instances in which 20*l.*, 25*l.*, and even 30*l.*, have been got at once; but this is the only case which has come to my knowledge of 50*l.* being procured at a time. When I come to describe some of the ingenious expedients resorted to by these impostors, I shall refer to the way in which the above benevolent nobleman was swindled out of his 50*l.*, and shall, at the same time, make some observations on Underwood's qualifications for his profession.

The more experienced class of begging-letter writers conduct their operations on the most approved business principles. In addition to

their constantly retaining clerks in their employ, whenever the success of their schemes will justify that expense, they keep their books in the most perfect order. There is not a merchant in the city who is more regular or correct in this way. They make a memorandum of each day's proceedings, which answers to the day-book of the merchant; while they have also a book corresponding with the ledger of the mercantile man.

All the begging-letter impostors who carry on an extensive business keep a regular diary of their proceedings. The following is copied from one of the morning papers of June, 1837, as the journal of a notorious impostor named John Douglas, who was only liberated from the House of Correction, where he had been confined for his fraudulent practices, in the previous September. I may just observe, that I some time since saw the original of the journal, but not having access to it at present, I am obliged to quote the extract from the morning paper referred to. It will be seen that, in most cases, the writer first mentions the name of the party applied to; then the assumed name in which

the application is made; thirdly, the fictitious case of distress got up; and lastly, the result of the application where successful. In some cases, one or two terms are made use of, as "Derry" in the first entry, which are not so intelligible:—

Feb. 6.—Marquis of Bristol. Derry; Mary Cole; blind; seven children; three cripples.

Feb. 8.—Admiral Curzon. Ship Pallas; Sam Bowden, mate; seized for 4*l.* 4*s.* rent; paralytic stroke. Result, 2*l.*

Feb. 15.—Admiral Curzon. Ship Douglas; Powden, Mackey, and Bill Stroud, cripples, and two stone blind. Received, 2*l.*

Feb. 26.—Sir Peter Durham. Lieutenant Spratt; leg off; hard up. Result, 20*l.*

March 12.—Countess of Mansfield. Widow; nine children; hooping cough; cholera morbus; measles.

March 14.—Lord Melbourne. Jane Simpson; father blind; mother dead; no money to bury her.

March 18.—Countess of Mansfield. Daugh-

ter supporting mother and grandmother by needle-work; lost use of both hands; furniture seized for 6*l.* 10*s.* Received 3*l.*

March 24.—Earl Fitzwilliam. Goods seized for 4*l.* 4*s.*; no bed; wife just lying-in. Result, 2*l.*

The above is, of course, but a mere skeleton or outline of the letters which are sent. The writers extend them by dwelling with an edifying circumstantiality, and expiating with an amazing pathos, on the pretended cases of distress. They are, moreover, great adepts at that sort of flattery of the persons addressed, which, to use their own expression, is most likely to “gammon” them. Of the admirable tactics of these epistolarian impostors, I shall have occasion to speak at greater length by and by, when I shall give some approved specimens of their correspondence.

Some of the begging-letter writers occasionally make droll remarks in their journals, in reference to the result of their applications. The following is a characteristic specimen of a recent case:—

June 20.—Addressed the Duke of Richmond under the name of John Smith; case, leg amputated, out of work for six months, and wife and seven children starving. Result, *21.* Not amiss, but hope to be more successful next time.

June 25.—Letter to Bishop of London; name, William Anderson; case, licensed clergyman of the Church of England, but unemployed for four years, and wife dead three weeks ago, leaving five motherless children. Result, no go; too old a bird to be caught with chaff; but try it on again next week.

June 28.—Try Sir Peter Laurie; case, industrious Scotchman, but no employment; lived on bread and water for eight days, but no bread, nor anything to eat, for the last three days; name John Laurie. Result, referred to the Mendicity Society, Sir Peter being too far north to be done; knowing rogues these Scotchmen; there is no gammoning them.

June 30.—Addressed Sir Peter Durham; case, lost a leg and arm in the service; was one of his men on board the ship Pallas; great destitu-

tion; not even as much as to get my timber leg repaired, being broken by accident; name, Jack Scraggs. Result, 5*l.*; Sir Peter a regular trump; drink his health in a bottle of best Ma-deira; have at him again in a fortnight or so; plenty more cases to be got up; plenty more names to assume.

July 4.—Address Lord Wyndford; name, Samuel Downie; case, ruined by attachment to Toryism; have often detected treasonable conspiracies, and been a proscribed man by my former acquaintances in consequence; great hater of Reform, which means Revolution; ready to shed my blood in defence of Church and State. Result, long letter, enclosing half-a-sovereign; miserable work this; won't pay for consumption of time and paper; Wyndford a stingy customer; stingy old boy to deal with; cut the connexion at once.

July 6.—Letter to Lord Holland; name, Jonathan Manson; case, endured for a long series of years a species of living martyrdom for my zeal for Reform principles; was intimately acquainted with Muir, Palmer, and the other

Scotch Reformers who suffered in 1794, for their principles; am now struck with palsy; wife dying, and six children without a bed to lie on, a rag to cover them, or a morsel of food of any kind to put into their mouths; most deplorable case altogether; dire necessity that induces to write; great outrage to feelings. Received 5*l.*, with a very compassionate letter; the compassion may go to the dogs, but the 5*l.* something substantial; jolly old cock yet; long may he live to lean on his crutches; will go it again; stick it into him at least once a fortnight.

July 3.—Wrote to Lord Brougham; directed to apply to the Mendicity Society; particularly obliged to his lordship for his advice, but would have preferred a sovereign or two; have no wish to make the acquaintance of these Society gentry; wonder how his lordship himself would like their bone-gruel, which they dignify with the name of soup, and to be kept to hard work at the mill to the bargain.

Unless some such journal or memoranda as

this were regularly kept of the proceedings of these gentry, it would be impossible for them to do business at all. They would not only, by exposing their own impostures, defeat their objects, but they would soon find themselves in Bow Street, or some other of the police-offices. The success of their schemes depends on the skill and dexterity with which they can vary their assumed names and pretended cases. If two letters were sent to any nobleman or gentleman soon after each other, with the same names or cases, their detection and consequent punishment would be a matter of moral certainty.

Those who are not in the secret, are at a loss to understand how the begging-letter writers manage to get acquainted with such circumstances, either in the cases of the persons whose names they assume, or in those of the parties they address, as could impose on the latter. The way in which the thing is managed is this:—They first of all ascertain who are the noblemen or gentlemen of the most benevolent disposition and ample means, and they then take care to learn what is the most probable

way of procuring a favourable hearing to their got-up tale of distress. This done, their ingenuity is put to the rack, with the view of trumping-up the most plausible possible case. An instance or two will suffice to explain this more fully. Suppose I take the cases of Sir Peter Durham and Admiral Curzon, as gentlemen whose names have been already mentioned. The begging-letter writers having in the first place ascertained that these gentlemen are distinguished for their benevolence of disposition, and for their strong attachment to the naval service, they apply themselves to the procuring of some particulars respecting particular ships they commanded, and the men who served under them. They succeed in this by going down to Greenwich, and entering, as if it were by the merest accident, into conversation with some of the pensioners there, who, over a pot of porter or a tumbler of grog, are remarkably communicative on all matters pertaining to the naval service. They at once learn the day and date of particular engagements, and particular occurrences. They also learn who were

special favourites with Sir Peter Durham, or Admiral Curzon, as the case may be ; and then pretending to be one of those persons, they refer, with an edifying minuteness, to a particular occurrence. The imposition is thus in most cases effectual, and the gentlemen addressed believing the trumped-up tale of woe, and sympathising with an old sailor who served under them, naturally put their hands in their pockets, and hand the applicant either one or two sovereigns to administer to his supposed exigencies.

Where higher game is aimed at, that is to say, where the prize on which the impostor has fixed his eye, is 10*l.*, 20*l.*, or 30*l.*, something more is done, with the view of practising the imposition successfully. They find out, from the sailors, the names of the most favoured officers who served under the commanders, and what their pecuniary and other circumstances now are. They also contrive to possess themselves of the autographs of these officers, and then they set down to work to draw out begging-letters, written in a hand as like theirs as

possible. The letters thus written have the forged autographs of the officers in question attached to them ; and so closely is the handwriting imitated, that in some instances even the parties themselves can scarcely detect the imposture, in so far as mere penmanship is concerned. I may mention, as an instance of the remarkable skill with which these impostors imitate the handwriting of other persons, and also as a proof of the infinite dexterity with which they draw up their letters, that in June, 1837, when the impostor Douglas, already alluded to, was brought to Bow Street Office, Sir Peter Durham, from whom he had a few days before got 20*l.*, in answer to a begging-letter, written in the name of Lieutenant Pratt, an officer who formerly served under the gallant admiral,—could not without great difficulty be made to believe that the application was not actually made by and in the handwriting of the lieutenant.

On ordinary occasions, they have four styles of penmanship. The first is a sort of handwriting which may suit “cases in general,” as

they are called ; the second is that of an old man of education, say a clergyman or doctor, who has been reduced in circumstances ; the third is that of a young lady ; and the fourth, of an old lady. I have seen a great many of the original letters, written in each of these styles, which were manufactured by Underwood. They are remarkably characteristic in every point of view. The facility with which some of the impostors can, through long practice, imitate different handwritings, is of essential service to them. Indeed, the begging-letter profession could never be carried on with any measure of success without the capability of writing in a variety of hands ; for being, as the rogues are, in the habit of sending a great many letters to the same parties in the course of the year, the mere assumption of different names would not, were the caligraphy the same, be a security to them against detection. I may mention, as one illustration of their skill in this way, that the impostor Douglas, already mentioned, lately got nearly 30*l.* from Admiral Curzon, in the course of one year, in sums of

21. and 17. each, the letters having been all written in different names, with suitable variations in the penmanship. This consummate impostor was thus, in one sense, living as a pensioner on the bounty of the gallant and benevolent admiral, the latter supposing all the time that he had been administering to the necessities of as many different individuals as he had received different letters.

In the instances in which the begging-letter impostors give the names of men of education and respectability of character, the writers take particular precautions against detection, because the punishment, in the event of discovery, is usually much greater than it is in what are called general cases. The answers to their application are always directed to be made to some public-house, coffee-room, or hairdresser's or other shop; they having previously asked the persons in the house or shop to receive any letter which may come to their care with a particular address. This the parties, knowing nothing about the matter, and having the amount of postage left with them, readily

engage to do. The impostors then make a point of watching for the postman outside, at the time they expect an answer, to see whether he calls at the place to which they requested their answers might be sent. Their object in thus watching is, to see that no police or Mendicity Society officer accompanies the postman, for the purpose of pouncing on the letter-writer as an impostor. This they look for as a matter of course, in the event of their imposture being detected by the party on whom it was attempted to be practised.

Whenever the begging-letter writers are fortunate enough (which they frequently are) in getting, along with some sum of money from a nobleman or person of distinction, a letter expressive of sympathy with their supposed distress, such letter is looked on as quite a windfal. It is immediately enclosed, with a begging-letter from themselves, to the various affluent and charitable friends of the donor, and usually insures some similar donation from them. The friends of the donor take it for granted, that before writing the sympathetic

letter, he would have taken special care to satisfy himself that the case was one of a legitimate kind. One such letter has often been productive of an abundant harvest, without the impostors being put to any other ingenious shifts to get up a plausible case. The late Earl of Plymouth once wrote a letter of this kind to a consummate impostor, at the same time enclosing a 20*l.* note, which enabled the rogue to levy contributions, without any trouble to himself, to an immense extent, on the aristocratic connexions and acquaintances of that very benevolent nobleman.

But the most successful mode of letter-begging when dexterously managed, yet remains to be mentioned. It is this:—The impostor, instead of applying to the party on whose pockets he meditates an attempt, either by means of some trumped-up case of a general nature, or by passing himself off as some given individual, pretends to be himself a man of substance, and to have drawn out, from motives of the purest benevolence, a representation of the case of some unfortunate person, whose name and de-

signation are always given with an edifying accuracy. The impostor, in such cases, always sends to the party applied to, a list of pretended subscriptions for the benefit of the alleged sufferer, along with the details of his afflicting case ; and on this list, he himself figures as one of the most liberal of the benevolent subscribers. The letter always winds up with an assurance that any remittance which may be made to the writer on behalf of the unfortunate party, will be most strictly applied to his relief, and that in the way which will be least likely to wound his feelings. As clergymen in reduced circumstances are, of all other classes of men, those who excite the most deep and general sympathy, the name of some clergyman is usually preferred, in such cases, to that of any other individual. This mode of letter-begging is, as I said before, generally the most successful, where skilfully managed ; but it requires very great ingenuity to do it well.

I alluded on a former occasion to the fact of 50*l.* being got on one occasion by the impostor Underwood from the late Earl of Plymouth.

The mode of application which I have just described was that which the impostor adopted. I may add that so pleased was he with the success of his expedient, as well he might, and with the princely though mistaken liberality of the noble earl, that immediately on receiving the 50*l.* note, he called on two of his brother impostors, and invited them to dinner in a fashionable hotel at the West End, for the purpose of celebrating his good fortune. Repeated bumpers were dedicated to the health of his lordship, and the most anxious wishes were expressed that he would soon, by another proof of his unsuspecting disposition and princely liberality, afford other opportunities of pledging his health in a glass of Madeira. Upwards of 5*l.* out of the 50*l.* were spent before the trio of rogues rose from their seats.

A few years since, one of the impositions of the kind described above, was detected under very curious circumstances. The impostor—whose name I forget, though it was mentioned to me by a gentleman who was personally privy to the circumstances connected with the detec-

tion of the imposition—having trumped up a most affecting case of distress, in which a clergyman of the Church of England (whose name I forbear to give, because he is still alive) was represented as the suffering party, applied to Lord J——, for any donation he might think proper to give on behalf of the afflicted divine. Along with this application there was a pretended list of subscriptions given towards the same benevolent object ; and the impostor, who on this occasion assumed the name of John Hughes, took care to call his lordship's attention to the fact of his own name, though a person of comparatively limited pecuniary circumstances, being on the subscription list. Knowing that there was a clergyman of the name of Mr. G——, whose living was anything but large, and seeing so many names heading a subscription list on his behalf, he generously sent "John Hughes, Esq.," a 5*l*. note, to aid in administering to the necessities of the unfortunate clergyman ; adding in the note which accompanied the donation that, if afterwards it should be necessary, he would

have great pleasure in remitting another 5*l.* to alleviate the distresses of a worthy man. In precisely ten days afterwards, another letter was received by Lord J——, to which was appended the signature of “John Hughes.” The letter, as the reader will anticipate, was highly eulogistic of his lordship’s humanity, benevolence, and so on; and stated that the writer, “Mr. John Hughes,” was so affected with the continued distress of the clergyman, that he had given him, though he could ill afford it, an additional 2*l.* The conclusion of the epistle of course was, that a more charitable action could not be performed by the noble lord than that of bestowing the second 5*l.* on Mr. G——, which he had before so generously intimated his intention to give. It is unnecessary to observe that Mr. John Hughes again expressed his readiness, from motives of the purest disinterestedness, to take the trouble of conveying the additional 5*l.* to the distressed clergyman. When Lord J—— received the begging-letter, he was in the act of putting on his hat to go to a public dinner in aid of

the funds of a charitable institution. But for that circumstance the second 5*l.* note would have been immediately entrusted to the care of Mr. John Hughes. The noblemen and gentlemen who sat down to dinner were about two hundred in number ; it was consequently impossible for any one to see all who were present. After the cloth had been removed, oratory became the order of the evening, and at length the Rev. Mr. G——— was announced as about to address the company. Lord J——— was thunderstruck at the announcement ; he was still more confounded when the veritable reverend gentleman stood up, with his face redolent of health, though Mr. John Hughes's letter of that morning represented him as not only bed-ridden, but unable to move either arm or leg. His lordship waited patiently until the reverend gentleman concluded his speech ; and then (determined, if possible, to have the mystery cleared up) advanced to him and offered him his congratulations on his sudden recovery.

“Sudden recovery !” exclaimed the clergyman, in a tone of surprise.

"Yes ; from your illness."

"My lord, you must have been misinformed : there has been nothing the matter with me."

Here again his lordship looked unutterably confounded.

"Were you not seriously indisposed ten days ago ?" he inquired, after a moment's hesitation.

"Not in the slightest degree."

"Nor this morning, either—not confined to bed this morning ?"

"Certainly not, my lord. I never enjoyed better health in my life than I have done for the last few weeks."

"Well, this *is* certainly strange," said Lord J——, emphatically.

"May I ask, my lord, what made you think I was ill ?" inquired the reverend gentleman.

"Why, your friend, Mr. Hughes, assured me you were so."

"Mr. Hughes !" exclaimed the clergyman, in accents of astonishment. "Mr. Hughes !" he added, putting his two fore fingers to his

lips, and looking on the floor, as if trying to recollect which of his friends rejoiced in the name of Mr. Hughes. "My lord," he observed, after a pause of a few seconds, "I am not personally acquainted with any gentleman of that name."

"Well," said his lordship, "you certainly do astonish me."

"Did this Mr. Hughes communicate the fact of my alleged illness to your lordship verbally?"

"No, it was by letter."

"Has your lordship got the letter with you? Possibly I may know something of the handwriting."

His lordship, fearing the nature of the contents might wound the feelings of the reverend gentleman, hesitated for a few moments to return any direct answer to the question; but the idea then flashed across his mind that the whole affair had been got up by some swindling impostor; and putting his hand into his pocket, he drew out the second letter, the one he had received that morning.

The feelings of the reverend gentleman will be better imagined than I could describe them, when he saw himself represented as if at the very gates of death, in a state of absolute destitution, and the subject of a subscription list, on which his lordship's name, and that of "Mr. John Hughes" were the most prominent. Some other parties were consulted as to what ought to be done, and it was agreed that his lordship should, with the view of detecting and punishing the fellow, enclose another cheque for 5*l.* on his bankers, to Mr. John Hughes, for the benefit of his friend, the Rev. Mr. G———; only taking care that a police-officer should be previously instructed to be in readiness at the banking establishment, which was in Fleet Street, to take him into custody the moment he presented the cheque and received the money. The remainder of "Mr. Hughes's" history is soon told: he figured shortly after at the Old Bailey, and then quitted this country for the antipodes, the expenses of his voyage being defrayed out of the public purse.

Other and very ingenious expedients adopted by the more enterprising of the begging-letter fraternity, in the prosecution of their deceptive purposes, yet remain to be mentioned. One of these expedients is, to have a very large quantity of printed warrants of distraint for house-rent or taxes, always on hand, and filled up in the usual form. These they enclose in letters to persons of known charitable disposition, detailing most affecting cases of domestic misery, and supplicating assistance. At the same time they enclose a certificate as to character, and a testimony to the facts stated, either from the pretended churchwardens of the parish whence the letter is written, or from some surgeon or other professional man residing in the neighbourhood. This mode of imposture, when skilfully executed, is usually a most profitable one. Another, somewhat similar, is that of having pawnbrokers' duplicates printed in the usual form, and the blanks duly filled up with dates, names, and so forth, in writing. These are sent to charitable persons, the impostors pretending that the articles of furniture, clothing,

for, mentioned in the impositions, have been deposited with the pawnbrokers under the most distressing circumstances, and imploring something to enable them to redeem the articles, and thus save their families from dying of cold or destitution. But though such fictitious pawnbrokers' duplicates are forwarded at any time to persons of a charitable disposition, with the view of swindling them out of their money, and are successful to a very great extent, they are found particularly serviceable when a pawnbroker's shop has been destroyed by fire. In such cases, availing themselves of the information given by newspapers regarding the nature of the calamity, they forge the name of the party, and send the fictitious duplicates as those of valuable property they had pledged, and which being all destroyed, leaves them in utter destitution. The accompanying letter fervently supplicates, as a matter of course, some assistance, to enable the parties, viz. the impostors, to rescue their family from absolute starvation. This expedient is, in most cases, a particularly successful one. Underwood used

to regard the destruction of a pawnbroker's shop by fire, as a great windfal. His duplicates, on such an occurrence, were diffused through all parts of town in a day or two after the accident; rich was the harvest he reaped from his tact and and ingenuity.

And this reminds me of the promise I made in an early part of the chapter, to explain what was meant by the printed materials and other stock in trade, which Underwood got by way of fortune, when he married the mistress of his former employer, Old Blind Williams, as he was always called. These materials and stock consisted chiefly of an immensely large quantity of printed warrants of distraint for rent or taxes, pawnbrokers' duplicates, the names and residences of persons most easily imposed on, with the journal of all the letter-begging transactions of his deceased master.

And here I may remark, that, taken all in all, this Underwood was one of the most ingenious impostors ever known on town. He was the natural son of one of our London aldermen, and possessed all the advantages which a classi-

cal education could give him. But mere education could never of itself have made him the man he was. He was a person of great natural talents, which had been improved by constant exercise. I have known other begging-letter impostors, who displayed very considerable resources in their profession, but they all fell immeasurably short of him. Their expedients were limited in number, his were boundless. His were as ready too, as they were inexhaustible. I have referred to the four classes of penmanship used by the impostors; each of these he could vary to an incredible extent. Other contemporary impostors were generally obliged to call in the assistance of other persons to insure variety, and consequently escape detection, in the handwriting. Those of them who carried on business to any extent, were obliged to retain some female to imitate the penmanship of a lady: Underwood needed no such assistance. He was everything himself. And not only could he write every variety of caligraphy, but his intellectual resources were ample even to excess. He could write on any subject; he had

not only the ingenuity to assume every conceivable character, but he could immediately, on assuming such character, sit down and write in the strain which was most consonant to it. I have looked over a large collection of his letters, and have been at a loss to know whether I ought most to admire the mechanical dexterity which enabled him to write so great a variety of hands, or the intellectual resources, which the appropriateness of his sentiments and style to the various characters he assumed, proved him to be possessed of. His inventive powers were of the highest order. If the faculty of creation be one of the principal attributes of genius, Underwood was a genius of the first magnitude. The force and felicity of his imaginative facts were remarkable. Had he turned his attention to novel-writing, instead of to the profession of a begging-letter impostor, there is no saying how high his name might at this moment have stood in the current literature of the country. United as were his inventive powers to great facility and force of composition, he must certainly, had he applied himself to the production

of works of fiction, have attained to no ordinary reputation. It can hardly be necessary to say, that a man of so much ingenuity was successful in his profession. I am assured by a gentleman whose means of ascertaining the fact must have been equal to those of any second party not one of his coadjutors in crime, that his annual income from his begging-letter practices must, as already stated, have been close on 1000*l*. He was repeatedly detected and imprisoned. He died in Cold-bath Fields' Prison, a few years ago.

Before I proceed farther in my observations on the begging-letter class of impostors, it may be right, in order to show with what ingenuity they go to work, to give a few specimens of their epistolary talents. The following letters were written by the notorious Underwood, of whom I have just spoken ; and as I have seen the originals, it may be right to state, that they are given without the alteration of a single word. The first is addressed to Lord Skelmersdale, and is signed "Mary Burn." It will be seen, that in this instance Mr. Underwood

assumes the character of a widow, and that he does not deem it necessary to study great purity of diction.

“ My Lord,—It is with most agonised mind and heart I presume to address these few lines to your lordship’s notice, whom I have had the honour of knowing by sight for a great many years, and also your lordship’s seat (Latham House), at some small distance from which I lived with some late relations, in the years 1797 and 1798. I am, however, a native of Preston, where I am descended from a respectable family, named Grimshaw. My parents have been dead many years, and I am the widow of a late respectable schoolmaster, who was proprietor of a boarding-school at Guildford, in this county, for a number of years, but who unhappily died of fever some five years ago, when I was left with four children, under eleven years of age, and obliged to dispose of my premises for the purpose of settling my husband’s few debts, defraying funeral expenses, &c. Since then, my lord, I have kept a day-school, in the parish of

St. George, Southwark, and held the situation of governess at a Sunday-school, although the emolument arising from the situation is scarcely worth my acceptance; but through its having pleased the Almighty to deprive me of the use of my lower extremities by rheumatic gout, during the last seventeen months, during which period I have been wholly prevented from attending to the duties of my avocation, in conjunction with the great expense attending the support of my family, have been the means of reducing me, from a comfortable station in life, to that of extreme and heart-rending distress; inasmuch as, being unable to pay my rent, my furniture has been distrained, and is now under the hands of my late landlord, or his broker; and I have been obliged to quit my late residence to save myself from an arrest and incarceration for a small debt incurred for the necessaries of life. I am become a great cripple, a melancholy spectacle; and but for the kindness of a friend, I and my fatherless children would have been driven into the workhouse, or have become poor houseless wanderers. How-

ever, through God's blessing, and the aid of humanity, I have been enabled to pay one moiety of the rent, for which my goods and chattels were seized, and I am allowed until the 24th instant to pay the rest; but am unable to do so, except through the aid of charitable assistance. In addition to which, my lord, I am sadly fearful, and under the apprehension that my present place of abode will be discovered, and that I shall be arrested, torn away from my dear children, and incarcerated for the small debt above alluded to, which is only 1*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.*, and which accumulated for bread only. I know not what to do, my lord; I am almost distracted, while my dear children, who are as innocent as lambs, during the last six weeks, appear to me to be quite happy with bread, potatoes, or whatever I can give them, which is a great consolation to me. In reflecting, this morning, on my unhappy situation, considering to whom I should apply, it suggested to my mind, from some little knowledge of your lordship's disposition, that your lordship would, in all probability, be pleased to afford me some small pecuniary assistance to-

wards helping me to surmount my difficulties, and for which I humbly appeal to your lordship's goodness and generosity. I assure your lordship, that whatever assistance you may be pleased to render, I shall remember it with gratitude to the end of my life I beg to subscribe myself, my lord, your lordship's most humble servant,

"MARY BURN."

"2, Cross Street, Newington Butts."

This letter was written in quite a lady-like hand, and was accompanied by a certificate from a pretended Mr. Mansfield, surgeon, London Road. Mr. Mansfield, *alias* Mr. Underwood, was, of course, very eloquent in his commendation of the excellent moral character of "Mary Burn," *alias* Joseph Underwood, and most earnestly recommended her distressing case to the favourable consideration of his lordship.

The following letter, from the same voluminous epistolarian, was addressed to the Earl of Stamford and Harrington, and is dated July 1st, 1833. The character assumed on this occasion

is that of a young lady, who had been seduced from her "tender parent's" roof by a gentleman, under promise of marriage. But the young lady, *alias* Mr. Underwood, will speak much better for herself than I could do: let her tale therefore, by all means, be told:—

"My Lord,—It is with shame, indescribable shame, I presume to address your lordship with these lines; but from having a knowledge of your lordship's person from my infancy, and through the report of your lordship's sympathising and benevolent character, I am about entrusting a most unfortunate affair to your lordship's honour and secrecy. I am really ashamed to detail my misfortunes, my lord, but I must; I must acquaint your lordship. I know of no other person so likely to render me some assistance in the hour of need, and to save me from perdition and a premature grave, as your lordship, whose humanity does honour to the feelings of a susceptible heart. Allow me to acquaint your lordship, that I am a native of Warrington, Lancashire, and the youngest

daughter of a gentleman who, for a number of years, held the rank of lieutenant in the British army, and who died in the year 1815, when I was but a year old, leaving my mother, who has for some years resided at Bolton-le-Moor, with five children (all girls) to support on a small stipend; that at Christmas last, I was prevailed on, by a person calling himself a gentleman, under the most solemn promises and assurances of marrying me as soon as we arrived in London, to leave my dearly beloved mother at Bolton, without her consent or knowledge; that he has forfeited his promises and assurances; and since I have been here, through my having frequently reproached him for his ungentlemanly and dishonourable conduct, he has left me in a most destitute condition. A few days subsequently he sent me the *enclosed letter* as a sort of an excuse; but, through my having spared no pains in referring to the sheriff of this county, Surrey, Sussex, Middlesex, and the city of London, I have ascertained that no such person has been arrested or is in custody; for in fact, no writ has been issued against any person of

his name, and that therefore his letter is nothing but a subterfuge for his absence.

“Oh, my lord! I am *ruined* and *undone*. I am lost, totally lost—lost to my dear mother, who *knows no tidings of me* or my misfortunes—lost to my dear sisters—lost to all my young friends and acquaintances in Lancashire and Cheshire—lost to all respectable society—have lately been turned out of my lodgings for the arrears of my rent, in the sum of seven pounds, for which my *trunks* and *wearing-apparel* have been and *still are, detained* and withheld from me—that *I am much in want of a change of linen and dress*—have no home or habitation to dwell in, with the exception of a miserable place I am allowed just to enter and sleep in at night *only*, at a poor widow's, who has a large family and several lodgers, and whose house I consider would be an unsafe and improper place for your lordship's letter to be addressed to, which has induced me to take the precaution of begging your lordship to address it as above. My sufferings are extremely great, my lord. I have frequently walked from here to Dean Park, a

distance of some miles, and there spent the whole of the day in solitude, without breaking my fast, or having the means to break it. Oh, my lord! I am suffering, justly suffering, for my act of imprudence; but the art and deceptions which have been used to ensnare and ruin me are really beyond human imagination, as letters and other documents, which I have in my possession, will fully prove; yet nothing will erase the stain, the everlasting stain, from my character. This is what I feel, my lord, above all. I hate myself, and despise the wretch, the invidious and despicable fellow, who has caused it, and all my sufferings. I am sadly fearful your lordship will form a bad opinion of me; but, when I inform your lordship that I am yet under nineteen years of age, and him who thus deceived me is thirty-three years old, and, in my opinion, prone to deceive and ruin the young and virtuous of my sex, that you will be pleased to permit my inexperience to plead a little in extenuation of my offence, and I hope to mingle your pity with your censure. I am gradually wasting away

through the want of food and nourishment, and, without the aid of humanity, must inevitably fall a victim to poverty and starvation. To acquaint my beloved parent with my unparalleled misfortunes and sufferings would, I am sure, be more than she could bear; it would certainly be the means of confining her to her bed, if not of sending her to a premature grave. In this unfortunate situation, I humbly venture, in appealing to your lordship's humanity, for a small pecuniary assistance, to help me to discharge my late landlord's demand, and to redeem my trunks and wearing-apparel; which done, I will immediately set out for Bolton, where I have no doubt of being able to prevail on a lady, a most intimate friend of mine and my family's, to call on my mother, and interpose in my behalf, and for my reconciliation with her. It is true, I acknowledge, with a sincere and contrite heart, I have erred in the respect above named, but *in no other* case, can the world, or any individual in it, say I have. I have honestly and candidly told your lordship the *worst of myself*; and, as soon as I reach Bolton, I

will take care your lordship shall be furnished with a memorial of my abilities, qualifications, and *general* character, from a gentleman of unquestionable character, who at present knows nothing of my sufferings, yet has known me from my cradle, and my family a great many years, and who, I have no doubt, will exert himself, under this unfortunate affair, to obtain the situation of teacher or governess in some respectable family for me, which I trust I am competent for, and which I shall prefer, under my unhappy circumstances, to my staying at Bolton, and living with my mother and sisters, the latter of whom might in all probability, on some occasion, be induced to reproach me for my misconduct, the more particularly as I am the youngest. I consider, therefore, that I should be far happier in a situation, and am convinced I can be recommended by some few of the most respectable characters at Bolton, where, to say the truth, I shall be ashamed to be seen. Let me beseech you, my lord, under these circumstances, to take the particulars of my misfortunes into your lordship's most serious

consideration, and to *pause* ere you put a negative : for on your lordship's answer depends much—much more than I can possibly describe ; my *fate even depends on it*, I in *truth declare* ; and I trust, though your lordship may in some measure blame me for my imprudence, yet, when you consider the art and deceptions that have been used against me by a most wicked man, that you will sympathise with me, and not suffer my supplications to be made in vain ; assuring your lordship that your assistance will be the means, or part of the means, of rescuing an orphan daughter of a British officer, under unparalleled distress, *from entire destruction, and a miserable death* ; that although it perhaps may never be in *my power* to return it, or compensate your lordship for it, I have no doubt but your lordship will feel amply satisfied and gratified in being convinced that your aid had the desired effect. This I promise shall be done, my lord, not by my own hand, but by one whose honour, word, and testimony, none can dispute. I now beg leave to leave my case in your lordship's hands, anxiously waiting the favour of your lordship's

reply, with the return of the enclosed letter for Mr. Henry Mannings, which, with a number of other letters and documents I have of his, will be absolutely necessary to show to my mother, and also to produce in a court of law some day ; for I am convinced, he has got property both in the county of Lancaster and Cheshire. My lord, I have the honour to remain, with the greatest deference and respect, your lordship's most humble servant,

“ MARTHA TURNER.”

This letter was written in a small neat lady-like penmanship. Indeed, one would think it impossible that any other than a female could have written such a hand. The letter was accompanied by another, purporting to be from the pretended seducer, which was written in a gentleman's hand. The latter was as follows,—and, it will be observed, it exhibits all that accuracy of diction which might be expected in a member of one of the learned professions.

“My dearest Martha—It is really most revolting to my feelings to be obliged to tell you, that, through some gambling transactions in which I have been unfortunately engaged, I have been arrested, and am now locked up in a sponging-house for a debt I am wholly unable to pay. I care but little for myself, my dear girl; but for you I feel most deeply, and I am wholly at a loss how to advise you for the best. I know well that I merit your anger for what is past, but the reproaches of my own conscience are, I assure you, sufficient punishment for the injury I have done you. If fortune should ever shine upon me, I will acquaint you with it, and fulfil all my pledges. Pray endeavour to console yourself, my dearest Martha, and lose no time in endeavouring to return home, in order that no greater evil may happen you. Please give the bearer my pocket-book, which contains some memorandums and a bill of exchange, which would be of no use to you. In my portmanteau you will find a new case of surgical instruments, which you can convert into your immediate use. I have

the honour to remain, my dearest girl, with unalterable truth, your unfortunate

“ WILLIAM HANDS.

“ *George Street, Blackfriars Road.*

“ P.S.—Don’t ask the bearer any questions respecting me.”

There was also in addition to this last letter, the accompaniment of a certificate, purporting to be from a clergyman in Margate, testifying to the truth, from personal knowledge, of all the facts stated by the unfortunate pretended victim of seduction. The certificate was written in a different hand from the letter of Mr. Hands the seducer, and was an admirable specimen of the style of penmanship most characteristic of clergymen.

I am sure my readers will concur with me, that in point of ingenious invention, the above letters might put our modern novelists to the blush. The creative powers of these writers will not stand a moment’s comparison with those of the author of the productions I have just given.

Hitherto I have spoken only of male begging-letter impostors. These gentry, however, are not confined to persons of the masculine gender. Even among the female sex there are occasionally some very dexterous begging-letter impostors to be found. By far the most noted and successful of the present day, is Harriet Reid, alias Harriet Minette. Not content with getting up cases of distress of every possible variety, and reciting them in a most pathetic manner, she introduces into all her letters, more or less liberally, a dash of the romantic. The last time I heard of her, was a few years ago, when she was brought before the magistrates of Marlborough Street, on a charge of endeavouring to obtain money by a fraudulent letter from the Rev. Mr. Leigh, the rector of St. George's, Bloomsbury. The letter extended to four folio sheets of paper, and was written as if from some gentleman who was a mutual friend of Mr. Leigh's and of Miss Harriet Reid, *alias* Mrs. Harriet Minette. The penmanship was bold and masculine, and no one could ever have dreamed that it emanated from

a female hand. The following was written on the envelop :—

“ The enclosed, dear Leigh, tedious as it is, for Heaven’s sake, peruse most carefully ; the cause of it must at once excuse it. It contains a melancholy occurrence, indeed ; one which, while it engages your attention, must cut you to the heart. Poor Mrs. Minette will soon be lost, unless immediately seen after. O, Leigh ! I am all anxiety about her—in agonies until you receive this—then all will be well. Heaven crown your efforts with success ! Even now, should the memory of the past be granted us, you must look down on your bounty to her with rapture ! ”

From the long letter, all written in a similar strain, I take the following extract, which, as in the one just given, appears without the alteration of a single word :—

“ Poor Mrs. Minette ! I shall surprise you when I tell you of what family she is by the

mother's side. She is related to yourself ; but I must not explain who she is, or who I am at present ! Oh ! may Heaven in its infinite mercy, avert the blow that now seems impending over this poor unfortunate lady. Continue your bounty to her, and you will soon learn what she is. She is thoroughly amiable, Leigh, and to me somewhat dear ! Her mother married a man of inferior birth, and her relations discharged her. She married Minette, a villain, who has thrown her, after riding in her carriage, on the wide world in helpless adversity. As I told you, Leigh, in my first letter, she is an amiable unsuspecting creature—artless—being truly warm in her friendship and love. Silly young creature as she is, we must, however, save her some pangs. Do something, dear Leigh, for her support—recommend her to your friends—set her up in a school, and get her some pupils ; but don't let her teach Italian, as that would bring her sorrows to her mind. But now for the more immediate melancholy purport of my letter. She will be lost unless you save her ; but I know you won't let her

want. I am in an agony of mind about her. I shudder to name the subject, but I must. On Sunday, a friend of mine, on her way to church, saw Mrs. Minette walking to and fro, in an unfrequented path, by the side of the river. She accosted her, but the unfortunate lady seemed quite lost. It is too clear, Leigh, her wicked thoughts. Dear Leigh, watch her narrowly. Things, at all events, look black. Take her under your care—reason with her—give her books—let her have a doctor, and see her take her physic ; but don't hint a word to her of what you do ; it might wound her sensitive feelings. She respects you—calls you her benefactor. Adopt her, then, as your protégée. Let her read to you, and come to you at church. Providence must surely have thrown her in your way, and made you his agent in delivering her from the fangs of Satan. Give her a few pounds, and Heaven bless you !”

What a pity that Mrs. Harriet Minette did not apply herself to novel writing ! Why, the letter from which I have only given a short extract, in

conjunction with what was written on its envelop, contains more of the romantic than will be found in many of the three-volume works of fiction which are constantly emanating from the establishments of the West-End bibliopoles. There are dashes of the pathetic in the extract I have given, which even Goethe himself would have readily admitted into his "Sorrows of Werter."

Who could resist such an appeal to one's feelings? The Rev. gentleman to whom it was addressed could not. He proceeded forthwith to the residence (which was in High Street, Bloomsbury) of the lady herself. She at once appeared in her proper person, and a dashing personage she was; but though the subject of his correspondent's letter was there to be seen as large as life, the worthy divine was as much perplexed as ever, as to who his very familiar correspondent, who had taken such an intense interest in the fate of "Mrs. Minette," could be. He had not been many moments in the lady's company when he began to have some shrewd suspicions that all was not right. He,

therefore, cut his visit to Mrs. Harriet Minette short, and proceeding direct to the office of the Mendicity Society, placed the lengthened and sentimental letter with which he had been honoured from her ladyship, in the hands of one of their officers. The result was that Mrs. Minette had the honour of a public interview with the magistrates of Marlborough Street office, who kindly undertook to guarantee to all parties interested, that society should not have, at least for three months to come, to suffer the calamity of losing poor Mrs. Minette by her throwing herself into the river when under the ascendancy of "wicked thoughts." In other words, she got a quarter of a year's free lodgings provided for her in a well-known public edifice in Cold-bath Fields.

The most extensive begging-letter impostors at present, are the person Douglas already mentioned, and another individual of the name of Johnson. Both have already been frequently in prison for detected attempts at imposture. Indeed all the begging-letter impostors spend a very considerable portion of their life in prison.

However, the circumstance does not surprise them; for they have beforehand taken it into account, as a contingency to be expected, in their estimate of the comparative pains and pleasures which are connected with the pursuit of their profession.

Of all the begging-letter impostors of whom it has been my fortune to hear, there are none for whose fate I ever felt the slightest compassion, with the single exception of one named David Jones. This poor fellow displayed a world of spirit and enterprise in the pursuit of his self-chosen avocation, but nature never intended him for it. He possessed no variety of mental resources, nor could he in any case disguise his hand-writing. I may farther remark, that he likewise prosecuted his profession under the most dangerous circumstances, namely, by forging the signatures of particular individuals. About ten years ago, he adhibited the name of a Mr. Alderson to a fraudulently got-up case, and passed himself off as a Mr. James Smith. He was convicted at the Old Bailey, and sentenced to seven years' transportation. Will my

readers believe it—on the very same day on which he returned from New South Wales, he wrote the very same letter, word for word, as that for which he had been transported, and again adhibited the same name of James Smith to it? One would have thought that the lapse of seven years, especially in the capacity of a convict in New South Wales, which of course must have insured a very sparing use of his pen,—one would have thought that this would have made some considerable change in his handwriting. But no; the penmanship of James Smith before he left England, and that of James Smith after his return, were so very similar that you would have thought both the letters (for I have seen them both) were written within an hour of each other, and with the same pen. The poor fellow was detected, and taken into custody on this his very first attempt after his return. He was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, before the expiration of which he died. I may mention that begging-letter writing, by means of forged names, seems to have been, in his case, a family vice; for the poor fel-

low's father is now, if still alive, undergoing the sentence of transportation for life, for a fraud which he committed on the late Lord Dudley and Ward.

I come now to speak of the other class of begging impostors. I mean those who are to be seen openly following their profession in the streets. The number of street-beggars is astonishing. Ten years ago it was estimated at 7500; I am sure the number has not diminished since then; my impression is, that it has, on the contrary, considerably increased. I think it may be safely enough assumed, that the present number of beggars to be seen in the streets of London, is not under 8000. It will startle those whose attention has never been called to the subject, when they are informed, that of the beggars who in so great a variety of ways, audibly and silently, solicit alms in the public streets, there is only one out of every twenty who is a proper object of charity; the remainder are impostors. In a case of this kind I would not, lest I should in any instance dry up the

stream of charity where it ought to flow, trust to my own calculations. The result I have mentioned, is given as one of undoubted accuracy, in a pamphlet published a few years since, by the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel, one of the most amiable and humane men in the metropolis. But suppose we take the proportion of street-beggars who are real objects of charity to those who are not, at nearly one in sixteen, that will give, on the above computation, the immense number of 7500 of this class of impostors, who are constantly on town. I have made inquiries of a gentleman who has been officially occupied with the subject for the last few years, as to what may be the average amount which the street-beggars annually receive from a generous but too confiding public; and he says that very few of them average less than thirty shillings a-week. In order, however, that we may be under rather than above the mark, let us take the average at twenty shillings per week, and this will give the immense sum of 7500*l.* per week, or 350,000*l.* per year, which these persons levy on a charitable public.

But though I have taken the average of the weekly individual proceeds of these impostors at twenty shillings, and though the gentleman to whom I refer estimates these proceeds at above thirty shillings, they amount, in many cases, to a great deal more. I know a boy, not yet fourteen years of age, who averages from ten to twelve shillings per day, and thus by simply holding out a paper before him, while sitting on some door step, with the words written on it, "A poor orphan boy." This juvenile impostor has been more than fifty times in Bridewell or the House of Correction, for begging in this way in the streets. He has been frequently brought before the police magistrates by his father, who is a most respectable man, and in easy circumstances, in the hope of reclaiming him from his mendicant practices; but the little rogue has proved incorrigible, and has been given up by his parents as such. It may be asked how he spends so much money? A good deal of it is spent at the theatre, to which he goes with a regularity equal to that of the actors themselves; and in treating other

youthful rogues with whom he is in the habit of associating. It is in order that he may obtain money to spend in this way that he persists in begging.

There are various instances on record, so clearly authenticated as to leave no room whatever for doubting the fact, of London street-beggars having amassed fortunes, varying from 1500*l.* to 3500*l.* In one or two instances they have been still more fortunate. Some years ago a woman who had stood with a broom in her hand for about a quarter of a century in the neighbourhood of Charing Cross, died worth nearly 3500*l.* She got the name among the fraternity, of the banker, because she was in the habit of lending small sums to others, at an enormous rate of interest. She sometimes also lent considerable sums to tradesmen, but never unless she received an exorbitant rate of interest. It was proved by a bill found in her possession, after her death, that she had lent one tradesman in Westminster 50*l.* for three months, but at the monstrous interest of fifty per cent. per annum. But the most extraordinary in-

stance of good fortune in this way which has come under my knowledge, was exhibited in the case of a man, a black, who for nearly thirty years swept another crossing at Charing Cross. He actually saved in that time, by his profession, 8000*l*. The case of this sable personage is alluded to in "Blackwood's Magazine" for August, 1837. The writer calculates the yearly average proceeds of the man's broom at nearly 300*l*. The above-named 8000*l*. was found at his death, in the wretched hovel in which he vegetated; consequently no part of it could have been the proceeds of interest on stock. Another woman, who for many years swept a crossing in the Kent Road, left at her death 1500*l*. to a clerk in the Bank of England, simply because he was in the habit of giving her a penny more frequently than any other passer-by she knew. I have mentioned, in my First Series of "The Great Metropolis," the case of the black man with one eye, and snow-white hair tied behind, who died some years ago, leaving many hundred pounds to one of the late Alderman Waithman's daughters; all of which money he had amassed

by means of his broom at the crossing, on Bridge Street side, from Ludgate Street to Fleet Street. The reason why this old black left his money to Miss Waithman, was that she not only gave him a penny or a halfpenny more frequently than any one else, but enhanced the value of the gift by condescending to accompany it with a gracious smile. The only other instance I shall mention of crossings-sweepers having amassed large fortunes, is that of a black man, who some years ago returned to his native country, the West Indies; carrying with him, as the savings of a long professional life, from 1500*l.* to 1800*l.*

But though a great many of our street-beggars might, in the course of twenty or thirty years, save as much in the prosecution of their mendicant practices as would enable them to retire on a handsome independency, the great majority of them are extravagant and dissipated, and consequently live up to their income. Not many years ago, one of them, a man of about forty years of age, actually paid to the landlord of a public-house in the neighbourhood of Ox-

ford Street, fifty shillings per week, for a considerable time, merely for what he ate and drank. Thirty shillings have been frequently the result of one day's skilful prosecution of street mendicancy. It is a fact, which has been proved to the satisfaction of several persons who had the curiosity to inquire into it, that a gentleman having some years ago—in 1830 I think—accidentally met with an old schoolfellow, begging in the streets—offered to procure him a situation which he had then at his disposal, the remuneration for which was either 80*l.* or 60*l.* per annum (I forget which), and a free house; but the other at once refused it, saying he preferred his present mode of life. Begging, however, it is but right to state, is not now so profitable a business as it was thirty years ago. I am assured that two of the fraternity, a young man and an old one, having met accidentally in the streets, the young man inquired at the other, what success he had met with that day: “Ah,” said the old man, fetching a deep sigh, “Ah! Tommy, very poor indeed, my boy; begging is not now what it was in my earlier days;

it is 50*l.* a-year worse than when I began the trade."

The expedients resorted to by street-begging impostors, are of an infinitely varied kind. Some of them must appear incredible to my readers; they did so to myself when I first heard them, and until the testimony of individuals, whose statements I could no more question than I could my own existence, established their truth beyond all possibility of doubt. All sorts of physical ailments and infirmities are assumed; but to be blind and lame seem to be two of the favourite artifices. I could relate numerous anecdotes respecting the pretended want of vision, want of legs, or at least the want of the use of them, of London beggars; but I am afraid of extending the chapter to too great a length. Another expedient very generally resorted to by the impostor portion of the London beggars, is that of pretending to be quite feeble, either from want or illness; and in that assumed character, either leaning against the wall of some house, or sitting on the steps of some door, or other place where there is a great thorough-

fare. Not long since, a man, seemingly about fifty years of age, was sitting, with nothing but rags on his back, on the steps leading to St. Andrew's Church, Holborn, which, as most of my readers know, is one of the most crowded parts of London. The day was cold, and the person not only appeared to be suffering severely from the inclemency of the weather, but looked as if he had been in the last stage of consumption, and in a state of utter debility. To produce the latter impression, and to impart as much as possible of a pale complexion to his countenance, which he could at any time cause to assume a most sickly expression, he had wrapped up his head in a white napkin, which having extended over his ears, he tied under his chin. A more spectre-like appearance, I am assured by a gentleman who witnessed the scene, could not have been exhibited by a human being. The ghosts which are personated in the theatres by those who act the part of the elder Hamlet, have not a tithe of the unearthly appearance which this personage had. The thing took amazingly. You not only saw the deepest

sympathy in the countenances of the spectators, but every now and then you saw pence—in one or two instances silver—finding their way into his hat, which was of course lying beside him in the position most convenient for the ready reception of whatever portion of the circulating medium should come that way. “The poor man’s dying,” said one.

“See how he gasps for breath!” observed another.

“Poor creature, he won’t live an hour!” remarked a third.

“Why don’t some one——” A lady was in the act of making some sympathetic observation, when, before she had time to finish her sentence, he started in a twinkling to his feet, and rushing through the ring formed by the spectators, darted down Holborn with a rapidity which would have bid defiance, I will venture to say, to the racing capabilities of the most nimble of the assembled spectators. Had the man actually risen from the dead, and come up from under the stones on which he sat, they could scarcely have looked more surprised at each

other. The mystery was soon explained. While the kind and compassionate people were thus lost in amazement at what they had witnessed, an officer of the Mendicity Society made his appearance. The impostor, as they say in Scotland, had caught a glimpse of him with the tail of his eye, coming down Holborn Hill, when some yards distant; and not relishing a month or six weeks in Bridewell, he thought it the best way to take to his legs at once. About two years since another begging impostor was often to be seen in Holborn, in the neighbourhood of Gray's Inn Lane, who appeared, from his way of walking, or rather of crawling, to be an impersonation of weakness itself. People were afraid to touch him in passing, lest they should upset him in the street. You would have fancied that a breath of wind would lay him prostrate on the ground. An officer of the Mendicity Society, who saw one evening with what success he was imposing his pretended infirmities on the public, took him into custody. He walked some forty or fifty yards without offering any resistance, and without giving ex-

pression to even a murmur; but having then come to a rather retired place, he suddenly wrested himself from the officer's grasp, and beat, or to use his own expression, "walloped" him so severely, that he was four months afterwards confined to his room. He is still alive, but has not entirely recovered, and never will recover, from the effects of the maltreatment he received at the hands and feet of a ruffian, who but ten minutes before, one would have thought, did not possess sufficient physical power to hurt a fly. The poor fellow's injuries are so great that he has not the slightest chance of ever being able to do anything towards his own support.

There are a great many blind beggars in the metropolis. Those who really are blind, and are consequently not, in that sense, impostors, are, in many instances led by dogs in their various professional peregrinations through town. Some of these dogs are so skilfully trained up in the parts they have to perform, that they look almost as imploringly to the passers-by for alms as their masters could do, had they the

use of their vision. The sagacity of some of these animals, too, also enables them, in many cases, to distinguish between those persons who are likely to give anything, and those who are not. Most of these dogs carry a small tin box in their mouths, to receive the gifts of the charitably disposed. By far the most successful beggar, through the assistance of a dog, of whom I have ever heard was Charles Wood, a blind man, who lived upwards of twenty years ago. As that was long before I resided in the metropolis, I will give the account of this singularly dexterous and successful beggar in the words of an author already alluded to. This writer says, "Wood's dog, which was certainly a most extraordinary one, he declared to be 'the real learned French dog Bob,' and extolled his tricks by the following address:—'Ladies and gentlemen, this is the real learned French dog; please to encourage him: throw anything down to him, and see how nimbly he'll pick it up, and give it to his poor blind master. Look about, Bob; be sharp—see what you're about, Bob!' Money being thrown down, Bob picks

it up, and puts it into his master's pocket. 'Thank ye, my good masters; should any more ladies and gentlemen wish to encourage the poor dog, he's now quite in the humour; he'll pick it up almost before you can throw it down!'" This ingenious mendicant is said to have realized a large sum with the aid of his "real learned French dog Bob;" but as I have not been able to ascertain the amount, I will not indulge in any conjectures on the subject.

There was one other blind beggar whose dog displayed such extraordinary sagacity, that I cannot forbear adding a word or two regarding the mendicant and his four-footed leader. The beggar was none other than George Dyball, who was so notorious in town some years since, and celebrated as the favourite pupil of the mendicant whom Flaxman, the eminent sculptor, chose as his model for his admirable statue of "The Jolly Beggar." He always dressed as a sailor, though he never put a foot on board a ship in his life. His dog, which went by the appropriate name of Nelson, would lead him to any particular part of town which he named;

and, incredible as it may appear, the fact has been established by personal observation, that the dog, by choosing the best road, and taking the nearest cuts, would, in many cases, conduct his master to the place in question in the same space of time that an ordinary-paced walker would have taken to go by the usual route. But Nelson could do much more than this. He was actually instructed, by his ingenious and roguish master, to make a sort of response to the latter's petition,—“Pray pity the poor blind!” This response the animal made by uttering a most impressive whine, accompanying his doleful language (if so it may be called) by raising his eyes, and giving a most significant and imploring turn to his head. But if he failed to attract the attention of the passers-by, he would sometimes rub the tin box he carried in his mouth against their knees, by way of an additional appeal to their charitable feelings. And when successful in his solicitations, Nelson would lay down the box in the street, take out with his teeth the money deposited in it, and putting it into the hand of his master, wag

his tail in token of his happiness at his good fortune.

There was another blind mendicant, who for many years levied contributions on the West-End people, in Bond Street and the neighbourhood, under the guidance of a little dog he called Blucher; named, I believe, after the great Prussian general. The only sentence this man was ever heard to utter, was a short apostrophe addressed to his dog, whenever he supposed, from the absence of the sound of people's feet, that no one was within hearing. And what does the reader suppose the apostrophe was? Why this—"Look after the money, Blucher!" "Look after the money, Blucher!" the little dog carrying in his mouth a tin box for that purpose.

The most successful of the impostors assuming the character of a dumb person, that have ever been brought under my knowledge, was that of a stout ruffian-looking fellow, who used, in the prosecution of his mendicant avocation, to perambulate the streets in the neighbourhood of Holborn Hill. He was in the habit of

going up to ladies—for to them he restricted his attempts at imposition—and uttering the most unearthly and unintelligible sounds, looking at the same time most piteously in their faces. One day he thrust himself in before two young ladies, who were walking along the pavement in Ely Buildings, and looking wildly yet imploringly at them, muttered out, “Hum, hum, hum,” in such frightful tones, that one of the young ladies could not divest her mind either of his personal appearance or of the unearthly sounds of his voice for some days afterwards, and was very ill in consequence. A policeman, who had seen the conduct of the fellow and the alarm of the ladies, took him to the station-house, and brought him up next day before the magistrates at Hatton Garden. On being placed at the bar, the presiding magistrate asked the policeman the nature of the charge against the prisoner. The former having stated the circumstances under which the prisoner was taken into custody, the magistrate inquired whether he was really dumb.

“Not at all,” was the answer.

"All pretended, is it?" said the magistrate.

"It is, your worship; he can speak as well as I can," replied the policeman.

"Well, sir!" turning to the prisoner, "we'll hear what you have to say to this."

"Hum, hum, hum," growled the fellow.

"O, you can't speak yet, eh!" said the magistrate, sternly.

"Hum, hum, hum," was the only answer.

"I'll give you three months in Clerkenwell prison; perhaps you may recover your organs of speech by the end of that time," observed the magistrate.

The prisoner looked fiercely at the magistrate, but uttered not a word, not even a "hum."

"Take him away, officer."

This injunction had a miraculous effect on the prisoner. "Please your vorship, I'm surely entitled to the eighteen shillings this 'ere policeman took from me, any how," said he, with a fulness and distinctness of enunciation which would have done credit to the most accom-

plished orator of modern times, and amidst convulsions of laughter from all present.

One of the most extraordinary assumptions of distress, and unquestionably one of the best sustained which ever came under my own observation, occurred some years ago, in a street in the neighbourhood of Shoreditch. The impostor in this case affected to have been suddenly seized with a species of epileptic fits. I was not present at the commencement of the performance, but understood that he first pretended to fall with his back to the wall, and then threw himself down, without injuring himself, till he was in pretty nearly a horizontal position. He foamed at the mouth at a furious rate; his eyes looked dim and glassy; and his whole body was dreadfully agitated. A number of persons were soon congregated around him, and one or two silver pieces, if I remember rightly, were put into his hat by ladies. I confess that I myself was for once completely deceived. I did believe the rogue laboured under some serious affliction. I could not suppose that any one would ever think of assuming that

peculiar kind of distress, even though it could be done successfully ; and I did not believe that any one could assume it so effectually as to impose on the spectators, even if he wished it. I was soon undeceived. A policeman chanced to pass that way, and coming in over to see what the passengers were stopping to gaze at, he exclaimed, " Ah, Jim, my boy, is it you again ? " at the same time seizing him in the most unceremonious manner by the breast of the coat. " Come away, my lad ; a good shake from me, you know, always cures you." And the policeman gave the impostor two or three sound shakes, not, I should suppose, very unlike those which the Newcastle apothecary gave to his patient. The impostor affected to look up in the face of the policeman, just as if he had recovered from a delirium, and observed, " O yes, I'm always better after a shake or two from you ! "

In the winter season the most approved mode of practising deception among the street-begging impostors, is to appear in a state of almost nakedness. They calculate on their ragged

appearance in inclement weather appealing more forcibly to the feelings of the passers-by, than any ordinary artifice to which they could have recourse. In some cases their clothes, if such they must be called, are in so tattered a condition, that one cannot help wondering how they manage to get them to hold together. I am sure that many of my metropolitan readers must often have been struck with the tattered appearance of a slender skeleton-looking woman, with the fragment of a black straw-bonnet on her head, who is frequently to be seen in Fleet Street and the Strand, in inclement weather. Her wardrobe is literally a bundle of rags, and they seem, somehow or other, to fit so well, as to give her the appearance of being in stays all over. This destitute-looking creature is seldom to be seen except in cold or rainy weather. Her Bardolphian nose and blotched face afford presumptive evidence that she expends in the gin-shop whatever she receives in charity. It is not that she cannot get better clothes wherewith in some measure to protect herself from the inclemency of the weather: it is that her

tattered appearance works more powerfully than any ordinary expedient would, on the sympathies of those who see her. Suppose she were to receive half-a-dozen gowns in a day, from persons compassionating her situation, she would never put one of them on. Her begging speculation in that case would cease to answer; the gowns would forthwith find their way to the pawnbrokers, and the proceeds to the palaces whence blue ruin is vended. It is a favourite practice with begging-impostor mothers, to compel their children to remain in some gateway, or other place fronting the public street, without shoes or stockings, in the coldest days of winter; because experience has taught them, that, in addition to money, gifts of shoes and stockings are often made to them. Some time ago, it was ascertained that one mother who compelled her two children, of the respective ages of ten and eight, to stand shivering in the cold in the winter season, in a gateway in Broad Street, Holborn,—averaged four shillings per day for the price of shoes given her children to wear, but every pair of which was nightly

sold to a second-hand shoe-dealer in Monmouth Street. One of the most skilful impostors in this way who ever came under my own observation, was a dark-looking man about thirty years of age, who stood, a very considerable portion of the winter of 1838, without shoes or stockings, or anything to cover his head, in the gateway leading from Amen Corner, Paternoster Row, to Stationers' Hall Court. He was a stout healthy-looking fellow, and my opinion is, that he became so inured to the cold as to feel little inconvenience from it. He was all ears to catch the sound of any footstep coming from either side before the party made his appearance, and the moment he did hear any such footstep, he assumed, with a truth to nature I have seldom seen equalled, a fit of violent shivering. The stratagem answered well; he collected considerable sums. He was never to be seen in a mild day. In fact, this class of impostors all disappear in good weather. They are clothed in a comparatively comfortable manner in summer, because a ragged aspect would not tell in that season.

But of all the expedients ever resorted to for the purpose of extracting money from the pockets of the charitable, by imposing on them through fictitious cases of distress, those adopted by a fellow, a few years since, were incomparably the most extraordinary. Will it be believed that this rogue, who was an excellent swimmer, was in the habit of pretending attempts at suicide, by throwing himself into the Thames, with a view to work upon the feelings of whoever chanced to see him after being taken out of the water? He always contrived to select a part of the river near which there were a number of by-standers, while another person, who was a party in the affair, took care to give the alarm, and call aloud for some boat in the vicinity. Whenever the fellow, pretending to have attempted suicide, was brought out of the water, the other, affecting to have been passing accidentally at the time, addressed the spectators, and said that the unfortunate man had been induced to make the rash attempt through the greatest distress, and that this was the fourth or fifth time he had sought to put

an end to his life; and that, too, within a very short period. Every spectator who had a heart within him, believing, as every one did, the got-up tale, put his hand into his pocket, and gave something to "the poor unhappy man." The collections thus made often amounted to two or three pounds. This daring expedient, however, was only convenient in the summer season; winter was much too cold for doing the thing comfortably. It will be asked, in what way, then, did this consummate rogue manage to live in winter? Why, by affecting to commit suicide by hanging himself in some place in the evenings! He used to fasten a rope to some lamp-post or other projection at the corner of a partially frequented lane or street, and then encircling his neck with another part of the rope, he would scale the lamp-post or other projection, as if about to throw himself down again and thereby hang himself; but always at this critical moment his partner in imposture made his appearance, and prevented the rogue from carrying his pretended purpose into effect. Of course an assemblage

of people presently gathered around ; the same story of distress was vamped up ; the deepest sympathy was expressed for the "unhappy man ;" and the shillings and sixpences were forthcoming from every pocket, accompanied with the highest eulogiums on the humanity of the other rogue. But the leading performer in this drama of imposition on the benevolent public, was eventually constrained to relinquish his part. The catastrophe was one evening very nearly realized in all its horrors. In ascending a lamp-post, after the rope had been fairly round his neck, he slipped his foot and fell, and would actually have been hanged but for the opportune appearance of his friend, who cut him down. From that moment he had such a horror of a rope, that the very sight of one made him turn pale.

I may here mention, that in the summer of last year, I myself saw a woman conducted by two policemen to Bow Street, who having taken a boat at Waterloo Bridge under the pretext of wishing to cross the river, threw herself into the water when the boat had gone a few yards

from the starting-place. She was brought out of the river, after being for several seconds fairly immersed in it. The policemen mentioned to me, that she had done the same thing, at the same place, in open day, several times before. Whether the affair was productive to her in a pecuniary point of view, I cannot tell; indeed, I do not know whether it was done with that view; but certainly when I saw her, which was a few minutes after she was taken out, she seemed to regard the circumstance as a mere matter of course.

Among the many expedients resorted to by female begging impostors, to excite the sympathies of the humane and charitable, that of having two children, representing them as twins, is a very common one. The usual practice in such cases is to borrow from some acquaintance a child as like their own in age and size as possible. In some cases where the impostor has no child of her own, she procures the loan of two children from acquaintances, making a compensation to the parties out of the proceeds of her imposition.

Those in the habit of observing what is passing in the streets, can hardly fail to have been struck with the circumstance of the apparent age and size of the alleged twins remaining the same for a long time. I know a lady, who was for a long time in the habit of giving, every Saturday night, a small sum to a woman she always saw on that evening sitting in Clare Market, with a couple of pretended twins. She at length began to feel surprised that the babies, as she called them, never appeared to grow larger. This led to inquiries, and to the consequent detection of the imposition. But the most singular case of this kind of which I have ever heard, was one which was proved before a committee of the House of Commons some years ago. The case was that of a woman who had regularly, at the same hours, occupied the same spot for ten years, all the while exhibiting two children as pretended twins.

But by far the most ingenious expedient I ever heard of as being resorted to by any of the impostor sisterhood, in connexion with children, was that employed about six months

ago by a woman who usually restricted her efforts at imposition to the West End. This woman was, about the time I have mentioned, seen standing one cold winter's day, at the corner of Davies Street, Berkeley Square, shivering from the inclemency of the weather, and seemingly in a state of the greatest misery. She stated, in answer to inquiries made by some ladies, who in passing commiserated her condition, that her great concern was about her "dear baby," and not herself. "The dear infant," she said, giving something she held in her arms a gentle pressure to her breast, "the dear infant has not tasted any nourishment to-day, I having no milk to give it owing to the destitute condition in which I am placed."

The ladies looked at each other in a very sympathetic manner, and one of them put a trifle into the woman's hand, desiring her to go and get some food for herself, that she might be able to suckle her baby. Just at this moment a plainly dressed man advanced to the spot where the woman stood, who was now surrounded by a small crowd of persons.

“What’s the matter?” he inquired, as he elbowed his way past some of the spectators. “A woman and child starving,” was the answer of one of the ladies in the crowd. On getting nearer the woman, he at once recognised her as a person he had seen in similar circumstances but a few days before. “Is the child ill? just let me see it if you please,” he observed, at the same time putting out his hand, and pulling the woman’s cloke forcibly aside. Down dropped something bulky on the pavement. “O the dear child’s killed!” shrieked some of the female by-standers; and a feeling of horror came over the minds of all the male persons present. On taking up the supposed child, what does the reader suppose it turned out to be? Why a bundle of rags made up as the effigy of a child!

It will appear a startling statement to those who have never paid any attention to the subject, but it can be proved to be a fact by several of the police magistrates, that in street-mendicancy, as in almost everything else, there have been a great deal of speculation and several

co-partneries of late years. Two or three persons take a house, and receive into their keeping a number of beggars ; just as certain women do those poor females who call themselves unfortunate girls. They take them on the condition of receiving every day all they collect, they providing them with bed, lodging, food, &c. and allowing them in some cases, though not in all, a certain per centage on what they receive. One inducement to the working mendicants to accept these terms, is that they have a sort of home to remain in, at least for some time, if they are unable to ply their vocation, or are unsuccessful in it. Another inducement is that they enjoy, in this way, the society of kindred spirits. It was proved by undeniable evidence—if I recollect rightly, on oath—a few years ago, in one of our police-offices, that certain parties, residing in the neighbourhood of Saffron Hill, had no fewer than thirty beggars, chiefly Italian boys, living in one house ; and that in order to insure a profitable result from the speculation, the younger ones were threatened with exclusion from the house

on their return at night if they did not bring home a certain sum. It was established at the same time on the clearest evidence, that a trade had been carried on for some time by the same parties, in the importation of these boys, who pursued their avocation by means of a hand-organ, a white mouse, or something else to afford an excuse for begging. It was stated, in April, 1834, by an Italian gentleman named Lucioni, before Mr. White, one of the magistrates of Queen Square police-office, that there were then no fewer than 4000 of these boys in England, and that many of them were sent out to beg through all parts of the country. The same gentleman also stated that the boys were most cruelly used by their masters. "The food of the poor lads," said he, "when they came home at night, and when the pence were taken from them by their masters, consisted of the very worst rice that could be procured, potatoes, and the rinds and scraps of bacon, bought at the cheesemongers', which are all boiled up together; they were all huddled into a room to lay upon straw. Their masters," he

added, "dress in the most fashionable style; wear gold chains, brooches, rings, &c., about their persons, and frequent the West End." I am assured, that in several instances these speculators in youthful Italian mendicants, have made a fortune by the business and returned to their own country, where they have purchased small estates and are now living in independence. In a great many other cases parents make a trade by sending out their children to the streets, threatening to beat them if they return without a certain amount of money.

Two or three cases have come to my own knowledge, of begging companies being formed on the most approved principles, and of street mendicancy being carried on on a system of the most perfect organization. The most singular instance of this kind occurred about fifteen years ago, when several rogues, all of whose names were given me, entered, with the view of plundering the lieges, into a brotherhood so close and cordial that, compared with it, that of freemasons would be unworthy of the

name. They divided the metropolis into districts, each having his own "beat" duly assigned him ; and availing themselves of a London Directory, they easily found out the names and occupations of such individuals as they thought the most likely subjects for being imposed on. Each individual of the fraternity averaged from twelve to fifteen shillings per diem, allowing only six working hours to the day. Their head-quarters were in the Commercial Road, where they had their jollification every night. The brotherhood lasted for some years. What the causes of its eventually breaking up were, I have not been able to learn.

Most of the begging companies or co-partneries which exist in different parts of London, hold stated meetings at the place patronized by the leading commanders of the band. Such place is always considered head-quarters. When new troops or partners are admitted, or rather when they are candidates for admission to the honour and advantages of membership, it is customary to examine, with great care, their pretensions.

If they are not deemed fit for the profession ; if, in other words, it is supposed they are not likely to prove profitable to the general concern, but rather, from their ignorance of their business, to be a burden upon the existing members, they are rejected at once. If a favourable opinion be entertained of their mendicant qualifications ; if, in other words, they are looked on as skilful impostors, they are received into the brotherhood with open arms.

But the most amusing part of the proceedings of a begging association usually takes place at the formation of the company. A sort of rehearsal, such as takes place in a theatre when a new piece is about to be produced, is then duly gone through, in which the pretensions of each member of the fraternity to the part he assumes are to be put to the test by the leaders of the gang, assisted by the opinions of some of "the friends." About five years since, a young man, now, I fear, dead—for he was then in a very delicate state of health, and I have heard nothing of him

since ; about five years ago this young man was seized with so unconquerable a desire to make himself personally acquainted with the habits, conversation, &c., of the leading mendicants in town, that he actually put on a suit of ragged clothes, and spent a whole night with fifteen or twenty of them in a house in St. Giles's. From his account of what he saw that night, I hope to be able to convey to the mind of the reader some idea of what takes place at one of the rehearsals to which I have alluded. The best way to do this will be to refer to a particular case. In the formation of a company it was lately proposed to establish, in consequence of a dissolution, caused partly by deaths and partly by differences, of an old one, there were three persons who took the lead in the matter. What was rather unusual, these three persons belonged to the different sections of the United Kingdom. The first was an Englishman, the second a Scotchman, and the third an Irishman. At all rehearsals it is an invariable practice to have an ample supply of gin, and, if the funds will

permit, something in the shape of boiled ham, bacon, or other butchers' meat. On the occasion to which I allude, there was no lack either of "summut" to drink or "summut" to eat.

"Now, then, Mick Ryan, my honey!" said the Irishman, whose name was Murtach O'Flannagan, addressing a countryman of his own, who wished to become a member; "Now, then, what character would your jewel of a self be after a-takin' up?"

"Och, it's meself would like to go upon a pair of sticks," answered Mick.

"A pair of sticks!" said Tom Smith, the Englishman, evidently at a loss to know Mick's meaning.

"O, he means twa stalves," observed Charlie Mackay, the Scotchman.

"Stalves!" exclaimed Tom, evidently as much in the dark as before; "stalves! what's that?"

"Sure an' it's what you English call crutches that he manes," interposed Murtach.

"O, crutches is it?" said Tom, surprised at his own stupidity.

"And do you think, man, that ye can gae like a cripple?" inquired the Scotchman. "Lat's see fat ye can do that way," taking two crutches from a nook of the apartment and putting them into Mick's hand.

"Ay, come let's see how you can walk on crutches," said Tom Smith.

"Do, come, Mick, my darlint, and be after showin' us what it's yourself can do in that same way," O'Flannagan remarked.

"Joe Higgs, don't you be a swallowin' that ere bakun faster nor you're a roastin' on it," said Smith, by way of parenthesis, addressing a hungry-looking fellow who was turning a piece of bacon with his fingers on a gridiron, which had evidently seen much service in that way.

"I vas only a lickin' o' my fingers, because as how they were burnt by this ere fat," said the personage who was presiding at the gridiron, without deigning to lift his eye from it.

"Well, don't do it no more," observed Smith, turning towards Mick, who by this time had put the crutches in a proper position for a start.

“Noo,” said Charlie Mackay, “noo, man, gae awa till we see fu’ the stalves becomes you. I wish I had a drap o’ Highland whiskey, the real Glenlivet. I dinna like that stuff o’ gin,” he added, addressing himself to Tom Smith, who at this moment was in the act of tendering him a bumper of blue ruin.

Mick made two or three tottering steps through the room, leaning on his crutches.

“Och, thunder and lightnin’!” exclaimed O’Flannagan, “that will never do. Ned Stubbs,” he continued, addressing himself to a little ragged fellow, who held in his hand a pewter pot full of gin; “Ned Stubbs, my boy, just give me a mouthful of the cratur to comfort my poor sowl wid.”

“You walk too stately like,” said Tom Smith to the candidate for membership.

“Ay, you must put yoursel’ a little mair twa-fall (two-fold), man, before you can do ony good!” observed Charlie.

Mick, obeying the instructions given him, put himself into a diagonal position, and crawled away three or four yards farther.

"By the powers!" exclaimed Mick's countryman, a gleam of joy irradiating his countenance as he gazed on Mick; "By the powers! that same's just the thing. Isn't it, my jewel?" turning to Tom Smith.

"It is to a hair; nothing could be better," answered the latter. "I say, O'Flannagan," added Tom, winking knowingly at the Scotchman, "he'll do capital well—eh?"

"Naething could be better: it's true to nature," replied Charlie Mackay.

"You'll make a trump of a 'un; take a glass of gin," said Smith, addressing himself to Mick, and handing him a glass of Fearon's best, which Mick drank off with due expedition, licking his lips after it, as much as to say, "I would have no objection to another of that same."

"Fred. Jones, vot character would you like to appear in?" inquired Smith, turning himself to a skin-and-bone-looking little Welchman, with a most demure expression of countenance, just as if he had been made for frightening away the crows from the corn; "vot character would you prefer?"

"Voy, I don't know as how I knows myself," was the luminous and satisfactory answer.

"My opinion is," said Charlie; "my opinion is, that"—He was about to deliver his opinion, but was interrupted by Murtach exclaiming in a voice of stentorian power—

"Och, bad luck to that spalpeen in the corner there! By my sowl he's drinkin' the last dhrop of the gin." Here Murtach pointed to a stout athletic fellow, with a face as black as the remains of the hat he had on his head, who was standing with his back to the others, with the pewter jug of gin at his mouth, and emptying it as fast as the liquid could find a passage down his throat.

"Vy that's too bad, Harley; you ought to be ashamed of yourself," said Mr. Smith.

Why and wherefore this personage was called Harley, or whether that was really any part of his name, I have not been able to ascertain; but he turned about, and, putting a bold face on the matter, insisted that he was not drinking the gin, but had only put it to his lips without being aware of the circumstance.

"Mackay," said Smith, apostrophising the Scotchman, "you were a-going to say something about Fred."

"I was just going to say that I dinna think he'll need ony ither character than he has by nature. I think his very awfu'-looking face will be enough to get him plenty o' bawbees."

After some farther discussion, it was agreed that Fred. Jones should, in the first instance, take the streets in his real character, and that in the event of its not being found to answer, the question should afterwards be taken into consideration what other character it would be most advisable to assume.

"Timothy Soaper, I think you said you would prefer a wooden leg and an arm crutch, did you not?"

This was addressed by Smith to a young, healthy-looking fellow, with a straw broad-brimmed hat, who was sitting cross-legged on the floor, in the neighbourhood of the hearth-stone, munching the remains of a quartern loaf, and a piece of bacon almost raw.

"Yes," he answered in a gruff tone, assum-

ing a perpendicular position ; "yes, I thinks as how I'll try that ere."

"Come away, then, my darlint, and try on the wooden leg," said O'Flannagan.

"Ned, my boy, jost gie us a wooden leg out of that ere nook," said Charlie, pointing to a corner of the room in which there was a very large assortment of wooden legs, crutches, brooms, tattered garments, and everything necessary to equip either of the mendicant rogues in any particular character he might think proper to assume.

A wooden leg having been produced, Soaper advanced to have it put on. Mackay undertook the task of strapping it. The knee having been fairly inserted, he proceeded to fasten it, when pulling the strap too hard, Soaper roared out as lustily as if he had been undergoing the operation of tooth-drawing.

"Be aisy, be aisy!" said O'Flannagan to Charlie, "and don't be after killin' him quite."

The knee of Soaper was fairly fastened, and he attempted several steps through the place, but he did the thing so very clumsily, and the

foot which protruded behind him, notwithstanding its being wrapped in rags, looked so very unlike a lame one, that the three leading personages in the company came to a unanimous conclusion that he would never do in that character.

"Then," said he, on hearing their decision, "I'll take up again the one vot I used to be in;" clapping his fingers on his eyes to denote that he meant the character of a blind man.

This did not altogether meet the view of Smith, Mackay, and O'Flannagan, because the candidate had not achieved great things in that character before. It was, however, agreed that he should appear in it for some time, until some one else which he could sustain with effect, should suggest itself.

There was another candidate, a fat shrivelled-faced, middle-aged man, deeply pitted with the small-pox, who also aspired at sustaining the character of a blind beggar. He had before "tried it on" by appearing to shiver with cold at the corners of streets, but as he had not found the thing so profitable as he expected,

even in the winter season, he saw clearly, now that summer was at hand, that it would not answer at all! He had therefore resolved on trying what could be done by personating the character of a blind man, and had, with the view of insuring success in his new line, been for nine weeks trying how mournfully he could repeat the words, "Pity the poor blind!"

"Let us hear you," said Smith.

"Yes, sure," said O'Flannagan, "be after repeating it to us."

The other did so, and drawled out the words in so touching a tone, that one would have thought it impossible for any human being to resist his appeals for a few pence.

"Charlie, my boy," whispered Smith into the Scotchman's ear, the moment he heard the peculiar twang of the candidate; "Charlie, my boy, this fellow vill do; blow me tight if he won't."

"Jim Burgess, vat vould you like to be?" said Smith to a black curly-headed, copper-faced, thick-lipped personage, sitting on a broken chair, who all this time had not once opened his mouth.

"I would likes to be a negro character," answered Jim.

"Och! by the mother that bore me, but that's just the thing for him—isn't it, Jim?" said O'Flannagan, turning to Smith.

"I thinks so too," said the latter. "With a little wet soot on his ugly face he'll look the character to a hair. Bring the wet soot here, Mac."

The Scotchman brought the commodity with all expedition, and Jim lost no time in thoroughly besmearing his frontispiece with it. "Och, by the powers!" exclaimed O'Flannagan, as he gazed on the sooty visage of Jim; "Och! by the powers! but he'll make the fortune of us all."

Two other candidates were admitted, each of whom was confident that a legibly written label, with suitable words, would, with the advantage they possessed of a most distressed personal appearance, insure a very fair measure of success without resorting to any other expedient. The one was to hold out his label in his hands, and the other was to have it affixed to his hat. The

label of the first was agreed to be, "Out of Employ;" that of the other, "Great Distress." The last was to be the one which was to be affixed to the hat. Both were certainly very short and very simple.

But I must not enter into farther details respecting this rehearsal of the beggars. Some there were who claimed to be admitted into the society on the ground of their powers of enduring cold, and consequently being able to appear half naked in the streets; while others thought they might, without anything of an adventitious kind, confidently trust to the power they possess over their features, by which they could assume the most distressful conceivable expression of countenance. The scene was altogether one of ineffable richness—one to which no justice can be done by mere description. The rehearsal having been completed, and the arrangements for commencing operations next day been concluded, the party ordered a fresh supply of chops, ham, bacon, gin, porter, and spent one of the most jovial evenings ever witnessed even in St. Giles's,—which is by far the most jovial lo-

cality in London. Who could have believed, that next day all the rogues would be seen crawling about the streets, the very personifications of apparent wretchedness and destitution?

I have often thought that, of all modes of street-begging, that of sweeping the crossings is the least troublesome and the most profitable. The latter opinion will, I am sure, be concurred in by all who have read the statements formerly given of individual instances of fortunes having been made in this branch of the mendicant profession. Of course, then, it is an object to get possession of a good stand; for if the stand be once fairly in the possession of one of the fraternity, the tenure will remain undisputed for the party's life. The crossing-sweepers are great sticklers for prescriptive rights. If any new comer were to attempt, either by physical force or otherwise, to dispossess one of the brotherhood from that small portion of the metropolitan territory which he has professionally occupied before, all the brooms in London would be uplifted against him before he knew what he was about, and he would have cause to

bless his stars if he escaped being scrubbed or "broomed" to death. The crossings-sweepers never fight with any other weapons than their brooms. A scuffle between two or more of them is a rich scene; it is one of the richest to be witnessed in a life-time. Whenever a crossing-sweeper dies, it is a great matter to be the first to take possession of the vacant spot. This priority of possession insures it to the party for life. Hence if the circumstance should chance to transpire that one of the brotherhood is dangerously ill, the greatest anxiety is evinced to be the first to take possession of his vacant post, after he has breathed his last. The number of aspirants after a productive stand—that is, one in a good part of the town, when the existing occupier is understood to be dangerously ill, is incredibly great.

In some cases, as in that, for instance, of the negro formerly referred to, who retired from business with a fortune of 1500*l.*, and returned to his native country, the West Indies; in some cases, the possessors of a good stand dispose of it just as men do other trades. It was

proved, a few years since, before a select committee of the House of Commons, that begging businesses had actually been sold for considerable sums.

I have often been struck (as I am sure every one who has passed through the streets of London must have been) with the great number of black men who possess lucrative stands. How it happens that so many of these ebony personages have been so fortunate, compared with the white population of London, is one of those things which are beyond the reach of my philosophy.

I have already remarked that, with very few exceptions, all the London beggars live up to their means; and that what they earn, or rather swindle out of a benevolent and confiding public, is spent in eating and drinking. The luxuries in this way, which some of our street-mendicants can often boast of, would appear incredible to those who are unacquainted with the subject. But gin is the staple luxury with most of them. I knew one, and only one, who spent a considerable portion of his professional proceeds

in the article of dress. This man, who used to be seen daily in the neighbourhood of Holborn, decrepid in appearance, and with the most ragged wardrobe ever hung about the human body, regularly relinquished for the day, his avocation at six o'clock in the evening, and in about an hour afterwards, was to be seen in the parlour of a public-house in Gray's Inn Lane—where he remained till eleven at night, smoking his pipe and drinking his brandy and water, and dressed in a suit of clothes, with his legs encased in top boots, which no gentleman would be ashamed to wear. The gentleman to whom I am indebted for this interesting fact, informs me that he has missed this mendicant for some time, and has not been able to learn what has become of him. Very few of the fraternity, however, waste much of their gleanings on apparel; the belly is the great thing with the vast majority of them: they are great gourmands. Not more partial is an alderman to his turtle soup, than are these gentry to the good things of this life. There are several of them who “spit” their goose or duck at least three times a week.

There are also numbers who hold regular convivial meetings, at which some remarkable gastronomic feats are performed. On some special occasions, they formally elect their chairman and have their series of toasts, their speeches, and songs, as at other great public meetings. It is known to several persons that George the Fourth, when Prince of Wales, went, on one occasion, with his friend Major Hanger, to witness the scenes which take place at these guzzling exhibitions of the mendicants. Tutored as the young Prince was by Sheridan, and others of his boon companions, in all sorts of frolics, he richly enjoyed the scene for a time. At last, however, a circumstance occurred which somewhat disconcerted him. The beggar who presided as chairman, after a temporary pause in the merriment of the evening, rose, and pointing to the Prince, said, "With the permission of the company, I calls on that ere gemman with the clean shirt, for a song." A round of applause from the rest of the "jolly beggars" showed how eagerly they responded to the appeal thus made to his Royal Highness. He

winked significantly at Major Hanger, and then stammered out the expression of a hope that, as he was no singer, the company would excuse him.

“Not a bit of it,” said the chairman.

“Ve’ll have no denial, youn’ man,” said another of the jovial crew.

“Perhaps, gentlemen, you’ll allow the gentleman to sing by proxy,” interposed Major Hanger.

“Proxy!” said several voices at once, “vat’s proxy?”

“O, another person singing for him,” answered the major.

“O, certainly, if he can find one,” said the chairman, looking round for the concurrence of the company in the remark.

“O, there can be no objection to that,” observed a dozen voices at once.

“Come then, H——, you must do it yourself,” said the Prince, addressing himself to the major. The latter promptly responded to the appeal, and sung amidst great applause a well-known ballad—well-known, I mean, among the

fraternity themselves—called “The Beggar’s Wedding.”

“Gen’l’men,” said the proprietor of a little unwashed and unshaved face, and a nose of remarkable flatness, who sat opposite the chairman; “Gen’l’men, let us drink the health and song of the gen’l’men vot’s just sung.”

“Gen’l’men,” shouted the chairman, drawing his own glass towards himself; “Gen’l’men, fill your glasses.”

Every glass was full to the brim in a moment.

“The gen’l’men’s health and song,” said the chairman in stentorian accents.

“The gen’l’men’s health and song,” shouted a host of voices, and in an instant every glass was emptied of its contents, except that of the Prince.

“I say, young man, vy don’t you drink to your friend?” said a round-faced mendicant, who sat opposite his Royal Highness, his eyes rolling in a fine frenzy through the inspiring influence of the liquid he had so copiously quaffed.

“O, I beg your pardon, sir,” said the Prince,

who had been for the moment lost in surprise at the ecstasies of uproarious merriment he witnessed everywhere around him; "O, I beg your pardon, sir, for the omission, it was quite accidental, I assure you." This was addressed to the personage who had challenged him for not drinking to the major.

"Vell, vy don't you do it now?" inquired the other, who was a very important personage in his own estimation.

The Prince filled up his glass, and, having drunk off the contents to the health and song of Major Hanger, held it out in his hand in an inverted position.

"Bravo! you're a trump;" "Go it, clean shirt!" shouted a dozen voices.

"Three cheers for the gentleman who has favoured us with so excellent a song!" exclaimed the Prince, beginning to feel himself more at home. As he spoke he rose, and waved his hand with his empty glass in the air, as if to lead the plaudits of the others. All present were on their legs in an instant, and deafening and universal were the cheers with which the

major was greeted. The scene was kept up with great spirit until at least one-half of the "jolly beggars" had drunk themselves asleep, and lay like so many masses of inert clay in a horizontal position on the floor. The Prince often afterwards spoke, with great gusto, of this adventure. He never mentioned it in the hearing of Sheridan, without the latter feeling the deepest regret that he was not an actor in so rich a scene in low life.

The beggars, at all their carnivals, adhere most scrupulously to the good old custom of having their toddy made in a large bowl, usually a pewter one. They hold that there is nothing like brotherly feeling in the modern practice of every one having his toddy made in a tumbler of his own. They are decided Tories as regards ancient usages; they have a perfect horror of innovation.

They are, for the most, early risers, and will walk any distance in the morning, before setting out professionally, to visit those public-houses which are most largely patronized by the fraternity. There is one public-house in Oxford

street, which used to be,—and I have no doubt still is, though I cannot speak positively to the fact,—crowded with them by six o'clock in the morning. The landlord of this house has repeatedly mentioned that, on an average, about 150 mendicants are in the habit of visiting his house in the course of a single day, and he always adds that he would never wish to have better customers; for it is quite a common thing for the majority of the number to quaff individually their half-pint of gin before nine in the morning.

In those lodging-houses which were formerly open to the begging fraternity promiscuously, and where business was carried on on a large scale, it was found, from experience, necessary to take certain precautions against the abstraction of any of the articles of furniture. Mother Cummings, who died a few years since, and who for a long period kept a lodging-house in a low street in Bloomsbury, always made a point of turning the key on her customers when they went to bed, and then unlocked the door with her own hand in the morning. By this means

she prevented any of them abstracting any articles of furniture in the course of the night; and as she witnessed every one of them quit their hovels in the morning, the idea of felony in the case of her property was out of the question. I may here mention, that Mother Cummings, while she was alive, kept by far the most extensive lodging-house for mendicants, of any of her contemporaries. She has been known to have had, on repeated occasions, upwards of eighty lodgers at once. And, strange as it may seem, it was proved to be a fact, that she had one round bed in which, when there was an unusual demand for accommodation, eighteen or twenty persons have been huddled together for the night. Mother Cummings made always a distinction between the better and inferior class of mendicants. With this view she had two prices for the nocturnal accommodation she afforded. The charge for a bed in ordinary circumstances was two-pence per night; but if any one chose to indulge in the luxury of clean straw, the charge was four-pence. The choice, therefore, of the different applicants for lodgings, enabled

her at once to divide her customers into two classes; and both were treated by her with a measure of attention corresponding to the place they occupied in her estimation. Mother Cummings eventually retired from business, having amassed a considerable amount of money. She took a private house in Somers-town, where she died. The news of her death spread like wild-fire among the fraternity, and her funeral was attended by an immense number of her former lodgers.

It would seem as if some improvement had taken place of late in the morals of the mendicant gentry; for until about twelve years since, not only was it necessary to lock these personages into their hovels at night, but it was found equally necessary that the knives and forks, the tongs and poker, and every other portable article in the places they used to frequent, should be fixed by iron chains to the table, or the walls of the house, as the only means of security against their being stolen. There was a sort of low eating-house in St. Giles's, that used to be largely frequented by the brotherhood, which

furnished the last instance, so far as I am aware, of this precaution being taken against theft. That house was thrown down some years ago, preparatory to improvements in the neighbourhood; and I am not aware of either the locking-in or the chaining system having been resorted to in any subsequent case. It is gratifying to hear of an improvement in morals among any class of the community; there are few classes in which there is yet room for greater improvements than among the mendicant fraternity.

CHAPTER XI.

EATING-HOUSES.

Their external appearance — The usual dishes kept in them —
Prices—Their internal economy—Miscellaneous observations.

I do not know whether or not John Bull has ever been described as an eating animal; but if not, I think the designation would be a very appropriate one; for he is notoriously fond of good living. Ample and palatable meals lie at the very foundation of all his ideas of happiness. The cook is, in his view, one of the most useful members of society. He has no objection to dispense any day with poets and philosophers, but the extinction of the culinary class of the community, he would regard as the greatest calamity that could befall his country. Go where

he will; live in what quarter of the world he may, his roast beef is always to be found reeking on his table. He can continue, if need be, to live without a hat to his head, a coat to his back, or a shoe to his feet; but to live without his dinner, is a doom to which he cannot submit, unless a stern necessity be imposed upon him. He looks upon eating as the first duty of man; and is most conscientious in its performance. It were well if he were equally exemplary in the discharge of all the other duties of life. In the partiality of Englishmen to good dinners, is to be found an explanation of the fact of there being so many eating-houses in the metropolis. To their estimated number, and the number of persons who daily dine at them, I shall have occasion to advert in an after part of the chapter.

The eating-houses of London have, for the most part, the external appearance of ordinary shops. They have generally large windows in front, exhibiting in tempting array to the passengers, dishes of beef, mutton, and other viands, in a state ready for the table. In other instances,

however, there is little or no outward show ; so that strangers have a good deal of difficulty in distinguishing their precise character. In many cases also, the eating-houses are not in the chief thoroughfares, but are situated in secluded alleys, or back courts, silent and sombre, and where the light of day, penetrating through the murky atmosphere, shines dimly into the apartments devoted to the business of mastication. The eating-houses, too, are of various qualities; there is an aristocracy and democracy of character among them, indicated, of course, by the charges which are made to customers, and by a little difference in style of furniture and service. Those of the more ambitious description are dignified with the title of "dining-rooms." There is another distinct peculiarity in these establishments. Some are celebrated, and very justly, for the excellence of certain dishes. One is famed for boiled beef, another for a certain kind of soup, and a third for chops, or beef-steaks. It is only experienced persons who can take you to these famous dining-places. A stranger has great difficulty in finding them out.

The great deal of business doing in each—the quietness that prevails—the adroit activity of the male or female waiters—the quickness with which you are served, are all matters of surprise.

The general eating-houses, those which do not depend on the sale of a particular dish, are each furnished with an extensive variety of viands. As you enter, a bill of fare is handed to you, or the waiter recounts the various dishes which are ready, going over them with a rapidity that compels you to be quick in your decision. A common routine is—Roast beef, boiled beef, roast mutton, roast or boiled turkey, roast veal, fowl, duck, pig, or pork; besides puddings, pies, soups, and fish of various sorts, and different kinds of vegetables. In the better class of eating-houses, the general charge for a bason of mock-turtle soup, which is the favourite soup in the metropolis, is from tenpence to a shilling, including a slice of bread. The quantity contained in these basins is generally an English pint. A plate of roast or boiled beef is, in most of these houses, charged at sixpence. Mutton and pork are the same. The price of a similar

quantity of veal or lamb is usually a penny or twopence higher, according to circumstances. If bread be asked, a penny more is added for it. If the party dining wish to have potatoes, three are brought him, for which he has to pay another penny. Porter or ale he can get in any quantity, from a penny-worth of the one and three half-pence-worth of the other, upwards. Should he be disposed to add pie or pudding of any sort to his dinner, he will get as much of whatever he asks for, as will satisfy any stomach not absolutely voracious, for threepence. Should he wish to make a wind up with cheese, he will get as much as is good for him for twopence. He will thus have a most substantial dinner—one which will satisfy any one but a downright gourmand—for sixteen or seventeen pence. The odd penny, if the bill amount to the latter sum, the party may as well give to the waiter, and he may then quit the place in that excellent humour with himself, which, of all things in the world, a good dinner is the most potent in producing. To be sure, he is under no necessity of giving the waiter a penny; but then it is the

custom; and who, after a good dinner, could refuse so small an amount to one who has been so active in administering to the cravings of his appetite? Besides, the waiters in most of these houses are young females, mostly rather prettyish, as the Cockneys say. That surely is a consideration which is not to be overlooked. Then they are so civil. I never knew anything that could surpass the obligingness of their demeanour. It has been mentioned to me, that in some of the larger houses the situation is worth from thirty to forty shillings a-week; consequently, it is an object to get into service in one of these houses. In many cases they can only do so on the payment of a premium, varying in amount according to the emoluments of the situation. The articles furnished in these establishments are all of the best quality. They are equal in this respect to anything to be found on the most aristocratic table in the land. They are served up, too, in a style of comparative elegance. Everything in the place, indeed, as well as the place itself, combines excellent taste with the greatest comfort.

By far the greatest proportion of the eating-houses in London are of a somewhat more humble class than those of which I have been speaking. They are plainer in the style of fitting up, and in the way in which the articles are served up; but, with few exceptions, every thing is nevertheless of the best quality. In these the prices are not quite so high as in the others. You may have the same quantities of all the articles before mentioned, except mock-turtle soup, about two or three pence cheaper than in the eating-houses of the first class.

Nothing more forcibly strikes the stranger who enters one of these eating-houses, than the singular promptitude with which he is served with every thing he orders. A minute seldom elapses between giving his order, and the thing ordered being on the table before him. Even in the largest establishments, where there may be forty or fifty persons dining at once, this observation holds good. The facility thus shown in supplying their customers with whatever they choose to order, is the result, in the

first place, of a division of labour, and, in the second, by persons of active business habits, if that phrase may be applied to the waiting-maids, being employed in these places.

It is a feature in these dining establishments which is worthy of notice, that though, when you go and seat yourself for dinner in them, you may see forty or fifty persons met on a similar purpose, you can have your meal in as much quietness and peace as if you were the only individual present. Nobody will even pass a look with you, far less stare you to such a degree as either to deprive the articles you have ordered of all relish, or yourself of all stomach. Everybody in these houses scrupulously reduces to practice the popular injunction of "Mind your own business." All is perfect quietness and propriety of conduct. There is no conversation going on beyond, it may be, the exchange of a few words, in the shape of whispers, between two or more friends, who may either have gone to the place to dine together, or met there by accident. In the leading dining establishments, all the daily papers are taken in; for, as

I have elsewhere stated, a newspaper is essential to the comfort of a Londoner.

The usual time for having every thing ready in these eating-houses, is from twelve to one o'clock ; and in most places the articles are kept in a condition for being eaten with comfort, by means of a heating apparatus for the purpose, until five or six o'clock. A few of the establishments undertake to furnish dinners in the best condition until ten or eleven o'clock. In the inferior class of eating-houses, the busiest time is about one o'clock, that being the hour which most of the working people set apart for dinner. In the superior class of houses, the hours in which most business is done are two and three o'clock.

All the eating-houses have ranges of boxes, each of which is usually intended to accommodate from six to eight persons at a time. It is impossible to say with absolute certainty what may be the number of persons who daily dine at these establishments ; but we may make a very confident conjecture on the subject. Assuming the number of eating-houses to be, as

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stated to me, about fifteen hundred—and that is certainly under rather than above the mark—and supposing that the average number who dine at each of these houses is sixty, that would give a daily total of 90,000. But in all likelihood the number is at least 100,000; for, in several of the larger establishments, the number who dine each day varies from two to three hundred. In Morton's Eating-House, called the Excise Dining-Rooms, in Bishopsgate Street, the number who sit down every day to dinner is estimated at from eight to nine hundred. It is no uncommon thing to see upwards of one hundred persons dining in this establishment at once. The quantity of butcher's meat daily consumed in this house, to say nothing of fish, fowls, pudding, pies, &c., must be immense.

The principle of a division of labour is here reduced to practice in a wonderful manner. One person's sole duty is, or at least was some years ago, to stand at the door, and with a low bow and a bland countenance, to accost every person who quits the place after having dined, with the expression of a hope that he has had every-

thing to his satisfaction. And when the latter answers in the affirmative, as all must do who are capable of being pleased, the other looks instantaneously a fifty per cent. happier man.

There are certain establishments of this kind in all parts of town, which have acquired a peculiar distinction for the comfort they afford to their customers; and out of such a large number, all of excellent character, it would be invidious for me to point out any as being the best. Each quarter of the metropolis appears to have its crack houses. There is one in the western part of the town, Hancock's in Rupert Street. There are here rooms both above and below-stairs, and the tables seem to be always crowded with a respectable class of persons. A first-rate dinner is furnished for about fifteen-pence. It may be worth while, before going farther, to state a circumstance which strikes every inexperienced person with astonishment. This is the facility possessed by the waiter, in recapitulating to the officiating carver down stairs, the long list of dishes just ordered. You hear her call from the top of the balustrades, to

some invisible person below, such a string of articles, that you are amazed both at the retentiveness of her memory, and the alacrity with which the said string of articles is caught up, remembered, and sent to the room upstairs. And then, how wonderful is the recollection displayed as to what you have had. She has brought fifty persons their dinner since you took your seat, and yet she tells you in a moment all the items of your "bill," and the total amount to be paid. There is, you will observe, no dawdling or hesitation, no throwing away of language. "Thank you—much oblige," are the only words that can be spared. To add the letter "d" to the end of "oblige," would be too much—would take up too much time. To make the sentence complete, by saying, "I am much obliged to you, sir," would be entirely out of the question.

Some time ago there was a waitress named Harriet, in a noted eating-house in the neighbourhood of Coventry Street, who was remarkable for the rapidity with which she communicated the orders she had received from her cus-

tomers, to the person employed in the room below in carving and measuring the requisite quantities. She conveyed her wishes through a speaking trumpet, which communicated with the "provider" underneath; and the amazing rapidity with which she made her various announcements, often had a singular effect from their passage through this pipe. All the words she made use of seemed as if incorporated in one. She had, too, a thorough contempt for stops, which, of course, contributed to this result. I have often heard her sing out, without drawing her breath, and as if all the words had been only one, — "Two of roast beef, three of roast lamb, four of boiled plumb-pudding, one of apple-dumpling, five of rice-pudding, four of Stilton cheese." Just see how odd and awkward to the eye these words appear if all given as one, — "Two of roast beef, three of roast lamb, four of plumb-pudding, one of apple-dumpling, five of rice-pudding, four of Stilton cheese." Equally odd and awkward did the words sound to the ear when all delivered by Harriet with an amazing rapidity of utterance, the effect of which was heightened by

the tin-pipe through which they were spoken ; which made them appear as if only one word, though of very unusual longitude.

Towards the centre of London there are the Chancery dining-rooms, in Chancery Lane, a place of very considerable resort. About the Old Bailey there are also some capital houses—particularly a “boiled beef house;” and if you wish to see a thorough house of a second or third class, where everything is at once “excellent and cheap,” go to an establishment in a dingy narrow street behind the Mansion-House. James, the head waiter is a fat jolly-looking person. He is an old stager. He has played the principal part in the interesting drama of ministering to the craving appetites of the patrons of the Eagle Dining Rooms, for a long series of years; and there is not a person who has ever received dinner at his hands, that does not cordially wish he may continue to perform his interesting duties for an equal number of years to come. He is a universal favourite; and very deservedly so; for he is infinitely attentive and good-natured. Long experience

has enabled him to attain a thorough knowledge of the diversified tastes of his customers ; and this knowledge is not suffered to lie inoperative or unfruitful in James's head. As a matter of course ; or rather, I should say, from a principle of politeness, he puts to every person who patronizes him, the question, "What will you have, sir ?" But then before doing this, he has instructed the under-waiter nearest to him to bring certain dishes, with the ordinary adjuncts of bread or vegetables, or both, according to the party's taste ; so that before receiving the intimation of the latter's wishes, the very articles he orders are on their journey to the table ; and, in a few seconds after the "order" is out of his mouth, the articles are placed before him ready to be put into it. He is amazed at the more than railroad-expedition of James ; and, in his own mind, calls the thing an edifying illustration of the phrase, "quick as thought." Were he in the secret, the matter would be of easy explanation. But James can do other things still more calculated to excite surprise. He can tell in many instances—I do not sup-

pose in all instances—what the peculiar predilections are of a new customer, in the way of eating. He runs over the list of articles at the new-comer's service, and always lays a special emphasis on the article he has "guessed" beforehand his patron will fix on. Those who are in the habit of dining at the Eagle Rooms, are often amazed at the almost unerring certainty of the article being ordered, on which James has put the emphasis. Whether the knowledge be intuitive or acquired, is a point on which I can give no opinion.

Several attempts have been made to establish table d'hotes in London, similar to those which are so general in Paris and other large continental towns. All such attempts may be said to have proved failures. It is true, that there are still two or three houses in which table d'hotes are advertised, and to which the public are invited, as if they were flourishing concerns. They are not so. They are attended by very few persons, and want that free and easy air, which is one of the principal elements of the enjoyment afforded by those on the continent.

The most spirited attempt ever made to establish a table d'hôte in London, was made six or seven years ago, by Mr. Leach—father of the distinguished humorous artist of that name—then the proprietor of Anderton's hotel, in Fleet Street. There were three dinners every day, at, if I remember rightly, the respective hours of one, three, and five. The number of persons who sat down each day, varied from 50 to 150. I have been present when the number dining exceeded 140. Though the price per head was only eighteen pence, the dinner was most excellent in quality, and ample in quantity. Everything, indeed, was of the very best quality that could be procured. There were the three courses, as at all public dinners: in fact, the table d'hôtes of Mr. Leach were in every respect equal to what is to be had on those public occasions when the ticket is a guinea; only there was not, of course, any wine or dessert. The expectation, indeed, of the thing ever being made to answer, was grounded on the supposition, that a very large majority of those who sat down to dinner,

would order a given quantity of wine. The event proved how erroneous was the calculation. Not more than one in twenty, "took their wine." They contented themselves with Dr. Wade's favourite beverage, "heavy wet." In some cases, indeed, they acted on the teetotal principle, though teetotalism was then comparatively unknown. After persevering in the experiment for seven or eight months, Mr. Leach found himself a loser by the speculation, to the extent of several thousand pounds.

In some few dining-houses, the practice is to lay down a round of roast beef—a shoulder of veal or lamb, according to the season and circumstances—before each of the customers; allowing every one to take what he pleases for a charge of half-a-crown. This is supposed to be a genteel way of dining; but it is a very uncomfortable one; and very few who have tried it, ever feel disposed to dine a second time in the same way. There are four grand objections to it. First you are charged half-a-crown; whereas, the charge in the most respectable houses of the usual class, does not exceed

sixteen or eighteen pence. Secondly, you have no choice as to what you are to eat: you must take what is set before you whether you like or not. Thirdly, unless you chance to be the first at table after the article is ready, you will not relish it over much; for it soon, by exposure, loses its savoury qualities. And, finally, unless you take care to supply yourself without loss of time, you will find yourself very imperfectly dined; for the waiters and waitresses evince a wonderful alacrity in snatching up the article set before you, and transferring it to some one else. It is true, you may ask for it again, when other gentlemen have done with it; but this is not by any means agreeable; and what is more, you may ask half a-dozen times before you get it; if, indeed, you get it at all. The officiating waiters or waitresses evince a thorough knowledge of this part of their business.

CHAPTER XII.

COFFEE-HOUSES.

Various kinds—Charges made in the different classes—Character and comforts of the inferior or common class—Their supposed number—Their supply of newspapers and periodicals—Their regulations as to reading—Their advantages.

HAVING devoted my last chapter to the Eating-houses of London, the present chapter may very appropriately be devoted to its Coffee-houses. These places now form a distinguished feature in metropolitan living. They are of comparatively modern origin. They were scarcely known before the commencement of the present century. They are altogether different from the coffee-houses mentioned by Addison, and other writers on London customs and manners, in the early part of the eighteenth century.

The London coffee-houses are of two classes. Those of the first class are comparatively few in number, and partake a good deal of the character of hotels. Some of them, indeed, though called coffee-houses, are in strict propriety hotels. Dinners of all kinds are provided in them, and wine and all descriptions of ardent spirits are regularly to be had, the same as in a tavern. The charges for the various articles furnished in these establishments, vary according to circumstances; but some of those whose pretensions are most moderate, are much more expensive than the second class of coffee-houses. In most of the taverns there is a large apartment called the "Coffee-room." The name is a misnomer. Tea or coffee are scarcely ever to be seen in these "coffee-rooms" of taverns, except at breakfast time. They are rooms in which dinner, supper, &c., with all kinds of wines and spirits, are served up agreeably to the orders of the customers. They are, in other words, places in which all strangers meet, the same as in the largest rooms of country inns, either in England or Scotland. I mention this fact,

because a great many strangers, misled by the words " coffee-room," go into these places under the impression that they are going into houses which are appropriated to the sale of tea and coffee.

There are a few coffee-houses in London, which possess certain features peculiar to themselves. Allusion is here made to those which, in addition to their furnishing the same articles as the other coffee-houses of a superior class, take in the majority of the country as well as the whole of the London newspapers, in order that they may be accessible to those who wish to consult them. The leading coffee-houses of this kind are Peele's in Fleet Street; and Deacon's at the back of the Mansion-House. These houses are remarkably convenient for those who may have occasion to examine the country papers, and the terms are very moderate. If you order any thing to eat, or tea or coffee to drink, you are charged nothing for reading the papers; but if you do not, you are charged the very reasonable price of threepence. For this small sum you may not only sit in as comfortable a room as

you could wish, and as long as you please, reading all the London papers, and those which have arrived in the morning from the country, amounting very often to sixty or seventy; but you may ask a sight of the file for the current quarter, of any paper you may wish to see. If you go farther back than the current quarter, but not the length of a year, you are charged sixpence. If you go farther back than twelve months, the price is one shilling; but not higher, whatever may be the date.

The two establishments just mentioned are numerous attended all day by persons who have occasion to examine the papers of a past date. The Chapter Coffee-house used to be a great place of resort for persons connected with the publishing trade; of late it has not been so to the same extent. It is still much frequented by commercial men, and its situation being in the very centre of the city, it is conveniently placed for such persons. Along with this class of houses, I should perhaps include the North and South American Coffee-house. At this celebrated place of resort, which is in Thread-

needle Street; the Baltic, in the same street; the Colonial, and the Jerusalem, in Cornhill; the principal American newspapers are always to be seen in the first-named house as well as various kinds of notifications regarding trade, commerce, shipping, and other maritime matters. There also are to be seen the captains of vessels who are preparing to sail to different ports in the western continent and its islands. And from them you can obtain any information you wish respecting the portion of America in which you are interested. In the Baltic Coffee-house, you can in like manner procure all the information you may desire respecting any part in the northern seas. It is the same with colonial matters in the Colonial Coffee-house; while the Jerusalem is the great resort of all persons, and the depository of all information connected with India and oriental countries in general. In most of these places a cup of coffee is charged sixpence, and a beef steak, dinner, or anything else is proportionally dear. To possess the advantages connected with the free access to these places, the usual practice of persons resident in London, is to become

yearly members ; which may be done by an annual payment of three, four, or five guineas, according to the particular house which it may be he wished to join.

The second class of coffee-houses, and those I have particularly in my eye, are altogether different from those which I have just mentioned. The prices are remarkably moderate. In most of these establishments the charge is no more than three-halfpence for half-a-pint of coffee, or threepence for a whole pint. The price of a half-pint of tea is twopence ; of a whole pint, fourpence. If you simply ask bread to your tea or coffee, two large slices, well buttered, are brought to you, for which you are charged twopence. Or should you prefer having a penny roll, or any other sort of bread, you can have it at the same price as at the baker's. You may thus have a pint of coffee, and as much bread and butter as ought to satisfy any reasonable stomach, for fivepence. If you are inclined to indulge in the luxury of an egg, order it by all means, and your bill will just be the even sixpence. And who could grudge this

for a good breakfast; for everything is of the best quality. People in the country talk much of the necessary expensiveness of living in London. In many respects the metropolis is undoubtedly expensive. Rent, taxes, education, and various other things, are exorbitantly high, as compared with the country. But the necessaries of life are, with few exceptions, as cheap in the metropolis as in any part of the kingdom; and the facilities afforded for cheap living to young persons, or those who have not families to support, are so great, that, with the single exception of the price charged for one's lodgings, the expenditure of such persons need not exceed what it would do were they living in any small country town. In most of the coffee-houses, you may also have chops or steaks for dinner. If the party be a rigid economist, he may, as regards some of these establishments, purchase his steak or chop himself, and it will be prepared gratuitously for him; but if that be too much trouble for him to take, and he prefers ordering it at once, he will get, in many of these houses, his chop, with bread and potatoes

with it, for sixpence, and his steak for ninepence or tenpence.

In many of the coffee-houses of a secondary or inferior nature, there are upper rooms, which are purposely intended for a superior class of persons—men whose manners and appearance show that they are accustomed to move in respectable spheres of society. The rooms in question are, in most of these establishments, fitted up in a style approaching to elegance; and are, in every respect, of the most comfortable description. Of course there is some difference in the charges as compared with those made in the lower rooms. That difference, however, is not great. What they generally are, will be understood when it is mentioned, that the half-pint of coffee in these upper rooms is charged twopence-half-penny, and the half-pint of tea threepence. Almost all the proprietors of coffee-houses who keep upper rooms, at the same time provide beds for gentlemen. In fact, in these establishments, strangers visiting the metropolis, or those who may be settled for a time in it, have every accommodation

which is afforded by the superior class of hotels, while the expenses are not half so great. These coffee-houses of a superior class have many advantages over the hotels, besides the great difference in the prices charged. In the first place, there is much less formality or affected dignity about them, and they are far better provided with the means of rational amusement. They take in all the London papers and leading periodicals regularly, together with the most popular foreign and English provincial journals. To those gentlemen from the country, who wish to combine comfort with economy, the coffee-houses of the above class are decidedly to be preferred to the hotels.

The entire number of coffee-houses in the metropolis is about 2000. They are, like the eating-houses described in the former chapter, divided into separate boxes, each of which is usually fitted up so as to accommodate six persons. It is impossible to say how many visit these establishments in the course of a day for the purpose of getting refreshments; but taking the average at sixty, which I should

think is no extravagant calculation, that would give the entire number who daily take a part of their meals in these establishments, at 120,000. Coffee, tea, &c. are kept in a state of readiness all day, from five or six in the morning till eleven at night. And the promptitude with which a customer is served, is really surprising : you have scarcely given your order, when the articles you wish are on the table before you. The greatest civility also is always shown by the parties serving: the proprietors, indeed, take care that none but civil persons shall be in the establishment.

I have said that a certain description of the London coffee-houses are most liberally supplied with newspapers; and these newspapers, it should be added, are most liberally read. The moment a person gives his order for the articles he wants, he bespeaks his favourite journal, either after the last person who is reading it, or the last who has engaged it, and he seldom has long to wait for it; for in all establishments of the kind, there is a sort of tacit understanding among the customers, that no one keep any par-

ticular paper more than ten minutes. In some houses, a notice to that effect is affixed to the wall. Usually, when it is known that others are waiting for a paper, it is not detained above four or five minutes. In some establishments, where the quantity of business done is very large, the proprietor, in order to insure the regular transfer of the papers from one to another, according to the priority of time in which the different parties bespeak them, adopts the regulation that every person when done with any particular journal shall hand it to the waiters, who give it to the party who bespoke it.

These Coffee-houses are places of great convenience in other respects than as regards their furnishing one with breakfast or tea at a cheap rate and at a moment's notice. If you wish simply to see all the daily papers, or to spend a few hours which would otherwise hang heavily on your hand, in a comfortable place, you can gratify your wishes at the small charge of three-halfpence. You can order, if you please, a cup of coffee without anything to it, and for doing so you may sit if you wish for five or six

hours in succession. In this last respect, strangers and persons not occupied, find these establishments to be places of great convenience. It is only unfortunate for strangers, that they have in general a great deal of difficulty in discovering the kind of establishments which would suit their taste or their desired expenditure, and it is to be regretted that there are no existing means for their readily acquiring the knowledge of which they are deficient.

I have said that coffee-houses are excellent places for reading. I might have added, for meditation also; for, unlike public-houses, there are no noisy discussions or disputes in them. All is calm, tranquil, and comfortable. The beverage, too, which is drank is a beverage, as I remarked in a previous chapter, which cheers but not inebriates. For purposes of reading, no beverage could be better adapted. Even in those cases where the charge for a cup of coffee is only a penny, the daily and most of the more popular weekly papers, are regularly to be had. In all of these houses there is also a more or less ample supply of periodicals. In

several of them, as I mentioned in my observations on the causes of the improved condition of the mechanics in the metropolis, there are extensive and well-selected libraries, including the works of several of our standard authors, any of which can be had at a moment's notice.



CHAPTER XIII.

PRINCIPAL MARKETS.

Covent Garden Market—Smithfield Market—Billingsgate—
General Remarks.

IN such a place as the metropolis of Great Britain, it may well be supposed that the leading markets must always possess no ordinary interest to the inhabitants. To strangers at a distance, also, they must be places of interest, as giving them some insight into the machinery, if I may so speak, by which the physical wants of the vast population of such a city as London are regularly supplied. I propose, therefore, to devote this chapter to the subject of the leading London markets. COVENT GARDEN MAR-

MARKET being on many accounts the most important, I shall begin with it.

Covent Garden derives its name from the circumstance of there having once been a convent in the place where it now stands. The convent is said to have existed until immediately before the revolution of 1688. At what period the letter *n* came to be omitted in the first syllable of the word "convent," is not known; but it is certain that it must have been omitted for considerably more than a century, as there are several instances on record, in works printed upwards of a hundred years ago, in which the letter is omitted.

Covent Garden market is in the very centre of London. It is close to the well-known theatre which goes by the same name. It is the property of the Duke of Bedford, and covers two acres of ground. Previous to 1830, the booths or stands in it consisted of rough-looking, slightly-built sheds; but in 1828, the Legislature took the matter up, and seeing the great public advantage, as well as ornament, to the part of London in which the market is

situated, which would be consequent on a suitable stone erection, an act was passed on the subject, which rendered it necessary that the Duke of Bedford should construct the present building, authorising, at the same time, the collection of such tolls on the goods sent thither for sale, as should, in conjunction with the rents which would be derived from the different shops, and stands or stalls, insure the noble proprietor a sufficient return for the money expended in the erection. The place was built at an expense of about 50,000*l*, and most ample has been the return which the duke has received for his money. It is understood that between rents and tolls on articles sent to the market, his yearly revenue from Covent Garden market is from 12,000*l*. to 15,000*l*. The rents vary according to the situation of the different shops and stands. Those shops in the middle or best part of the market, which is a great thoroughfare, bring a rent, including a little accommodation in the story above, which in most cases is used as dwelling-apartments, of from 80*l*. to 110*l*. a year. And yet these shops are

but small; they do not, judging from a glance of the eye, measure more than fourteen or fifteen feet by about twelve feet. On all wag-gons, carts, &c., bringing goods to the market, there is a toll varying according to the nature of the articles brought, from eighteenpence to sixpence. The only instances in which this exaction is departed from, is where the vegetables or other articles brought, are grown by some proprietor of a shop or stall.

The building is handsome. At the east and west ends, and in several parts of the interior, it is supported by massy pillars of granite. It is of a quadrangular form. There are three ranges of shops. The middle or most handsome range is double. Between the first and second, and second and third range, there is a large open space, which is occupied by various persons, and with various sorts of vegetables, the parties paying a certain rental per day. This rental varies according to circumstances, and according to situation, from one shilling to fourpence per square foot. The most southern range of shops is exclusively appropriated to

the sale of potatoes. In the wide space between this range and the middle range of shops, you see hundreds of persons offering every variety of vegetables used in London, for sale. The middle range of shops, which as already stated is double, that is to say, there are shops on each side of the thoroughfare,—are chiefly used for the sale of all the finer varieties of fruits and vegetables. The remaining, or northern range of shops, is set apart for the sale of oranges, apples, nuts; and the sale of gooseberries, cherries, peas, &c., in their seasons; but these shops are, for the most part, smaller in size, inferior in appearance, and are consequently not frequented by the same class of persons.

To enumerate the various articles which are sold in Covent Garden market, were impossible. I cannot give a better idea of their variety, than to say that they include everything, in the shape of green fruit, which is grown in foreign countries and imported into Great Britain, and all the varieties of fruit, and flowers, and vegetables, which are the produce of our own land. In the shops, in the middle range, you are struck with amazement at the variety and

rich appearance of the finer class of fruits, with which they are chiefly filled. You can scarcely divest your mind of the idea that you have been suddenly transplanted to some southern clime, celebrated for the abundance, the excellent quality, and rich variety of its fruits. It is, in one respect, a positive repast to *see* the abundance of fine fruits with which these shops abound, and to inhale the fragrance they emit. The articles which are sold in this part of Covent Garden market, can only be purchased by the higher classes of society; their prices put them beyond the reach of persons of limited means. These prices are always high; of course, however, they vary according to circumstances. At certain seasons of the year particular articles are much dearer than others. Strawberries, for example, bring a hundred times the price at one time, which they do at another. Very early in the season, when small quantities which have been produced in hot-houses, are exhibited for sale, the prices they bring are sometimes incredibly high. I have been assured that a few summers ago, a small quantity of strawberries was bought at twenty-

five shillings per ounce. The enormous price of a guinea an ounce has been repeatedly known to be given ; half-a-guinea is quite common in the early part of the season. I need hardly say that such prices are only given by aristocratic families, and the inducement is, that the parties may get the reputation of having been among the first of the "fashionables" in the West End, to set a dish of strawberries before their friends. Cherries, gooseberries, potatoes, peas, &c., respectively fetch incredibly high prices, on their first introduction to the market. It is curious to observe the great and sudden fall which sometimes takes place in the price of fruit, when propitious weather gives to it a great unexpected advance towards ripeness. In 1836, one of the merchants in Covent Garden market bought a quantity of pears, which having grown in a garden peculiarly favoured as to situation and other circumstances, had ripened earlier than the pears which were grown in other gardens. On the day on which he bought them, he sold them at one guinea per bushel ; but the weather for

the three following days having become so propitious as generally to ripen pears, he was obliged to sell them on the fourth day, at seven shillings per bushel, or one-third of the price which they had brought a few days previously.

Of the quantity of fruit and vegetables sold in the course of a day in Covent Garden market, it is impossible even to form a conjecture. That it must be immensely great, may be inferred from the fact, that it is a sort of depôt for the whole of the metropolis. The small quantities sold at Hungerford and Farringdon markets are not worth mentioning. From all parts of London people flock to Covent Garden. I do not say that every family that wishes to purchase some fruit, or a quantity of vegetables, sends direct to Covent Garden market for it; but still it comes to them indirectly from Covent Garden market. To that market all the fruit and vegetables are in the first instance brought from the country and the neighbourhood of London; and thence it is carried to all parts of the town by a class of persons called green-grocers, who,

in small shops kept for the purpose, vend any quantity, small or great, to families in the neighbourhood. These green-grocers make a point of attending Covent Garden market every morning about five or six o'clock, where they purchase quantities, in wholesale, of all the most saleable kinds of fruit and vegetables. These they retail at reasonable profits in the course of the day to their customers.

Some of the merchants in Covent Garden market do a very extensive business. How must the country reader be surprised when I mention, that I know one who is in the habit, during the proper season, of receiving, every day, two immensely large waggon-loads of asparagus ! Some of these merchants have made large fortunes. Others again, as in every other business, lose large sums by speculations in commodities of so perishable a nature as fruit and vegetables. I know one instance of a party having lost 100,000*l.*, or rather sunk that sum, in his efforts to establish a large business in Covent Garden market.

To form a proper notion of the immense

quantity of articles sold in Covent Garden market, it will be necessary to visit it in the morning about five or six o'clock. At that time you will see not only the open space in and about itself, filled with waggons, carts, trucks, &c., but all of the five or six streets leading immediately to it. These vehicles are so closely wedged together, that it will be sometimes half an hour before they can move a foot, and even then only when some others at the outside have left the place. The vehicles, when they come to the market, are laden with fruit and vegetables. Some of them are drawn by several horses, some by only one. I cannot state with certainty what their number is, but I am convinced that, of one kind or other, there are sometimes as many as from four to five hundred. Many of them come a great distance. Some of them come from places twenty or thirty miles distant from the metropolis.

It is a strange sight to witness Covent Garden market about six o'clock on a summer morning. I know of no scene in the metropolis which is better worth seeing, and yet it is one

which perhaps not one out of a thousand of the inhabitants has ever witnessed. Only fancy the immense number of vehicles I have already mentioned, with the wheels or horses in a great many cases entangled with each other; and then picture to yourself the drivers and assistants, for the most part dressed in the smock frocks which it always did old Cobbett's heart so much good to see. When you see all this in your mind's eye, imagine ten or fifteen thousand other persons, chiefly green-grocers and persons who keep apple and orange stalls in the streets, all busy buying and selling. And to complete the picture, you must suppose your ears are ringing again with the everlasting noise caused by the altercations, most liberally interspersed with every variety of oaths, which take place as to the right of different persons to particular places in the market. Add to this the loud bellowings of the waggon and carmen, and the tremendous denunciations which they hurl at each other's heads, when their vehicles come in contact; and to crown all, fancy you hear at the same time, thousands of Irishwomen (for the

women who keep apple and orange stalls in the streets are mostly Irish,) abusing each other and everybody else in the peculiar brogue of their respective provinces,—imagine to yourself that you see and hear all this, and you will be able to form some idea of the scene which Covent Garden market daily presents. All the public houses in the neighbourhood are crowded with persons attending Covent Garden market; and every such house, in so far as the sounds you hear are concerned, is a second Babel on a small scale. In addition to the public houses in the vicinity of Covent Garden market, there are other places where refreshments are to be had; there are several coffee-houses in the neighbourhood, where the more respectable persons who attend the market go to get refreshments; and for the convenience of those who wish a cheaper beverage than is furnished in coffee-houses, there are various places at the several inlets to the market, where, in the open air, and without a seat to sit on, any one is provided with tea and coffee, if such they can be called; together with the accompaniments of bread and butter,

or bread without butter, at the cheapest possible rate. The liquids dignified with the names of tea and coffee, are kept constantly hot by means of charcoal applied to a tin utensil, supported on an iron stand.

Such is Covent Garden market in the morning. Through the day its appearance is quite different. All the waggons, carts, and other vehicles, are usually removed by ten o'clock; and after that hour, you are principally struck with the innumerable boxes of oranges (in their seasons), hampers of apples and other fruit, which are still exposed for sale at the extremities of the market. The better class of shops are visited all day by the nobility and gentry who intend purchasing luxuries, and the other shops are visited by persons of more limited means, and more humble rank in society. Sometimes a number of the carriages of the nobility are to be seen outside the market at its western extremity, where they wait until the parties have made their purchases. In the proper season nothing can be more delightful than to witness the infinite variety of flowers which

are constantly exposed to sale at the western part of the market. Were I a poet, which happily or unhappily, as the case may be, "the gods" have not made me, I would here say something fine and *flowery* about the deliciousness of the scent which these flowers scatter through the surrounding atmosphere. In one word, for my space is exhausted, Covent Garden market, whether early in a summer's morning, or at any hour in the course of the day, is one of the most interesting scenes to be seen in the metropolis.

About fifteen or sixteen months ago the late Duke of Bedford put an end to Sunday trading in Covent Garden market. Before that time nearly all the shops were open, and a considerable quantity of business was done on the Sabbath day. Many of the occupiers of the shops thought it would be ruinous to their interests, to be prevented from selling their commodities on Sundays; the event, however, has, I believe, convinced them that such an opinion was erroneous; and if I be not misinformed, they are now, with one or two exceptions, thankful for

the interposition of the duke in abolishing Sunday trading in the market.

SMITHFIELD MARKET is the great metropolitan mart for the sale of cattle, sheep, pigs, &c. It is a little to the north-east of Newgate. The part of the town in which it is placed has somewhat of a heavy, sombre aspect. This is partly to be accounted for from the fact of most of the surrounding buildings being old, and of a very plain description of architecture. Hardly any of them are of a more recent date than immediately after the great fire of London, in 1666.

For how long a period Smithfield has been the great cattle-market of London, it is impossible to say. That it has been so for at least four centuries, there can be no question; for mention is made of it, as a cattle-market, four hundred years ago, in several old works on London. In the reign of Elizabeth it was more than eight times its present size. It is now under five acres; it was then forty acres. At what time Smithfield market was reduced to its present comparatively small limits, is not

known. A general opinion is, that it was when rebuilding the houses in the neighbourhood which were destroyed by the great fire.

Smithfield market has acquired an unenviable notoriety as having been the place where so many martyrdoms occurred during the temporary ascendancy of a popish sovereign, soon after the Reformation. Indeed, it was at one time almost the only place in the metropolis where Protestants were martyred for their religious opinions. Those who are conversant with the history of England, will be able to recal to their minds many instances in which the most illustrious Protestant divines this country has produced, there sealed their faith with their blood. At one time, indeed, Smithfield was but another name for Protestant martyrdom.

Smithfield market is an open space in the form of a square. The far greater portion of it is set apart for the sale of cattle: the remainder is used for the sale of sheep. The sheep part of the market is towards the north-west. A little off the market, in an eastern direction, is an open space of some extent for the sale of pigs. The

greatest part of the market is laid off in separate stands or pens. These vary in size, so as to contain any number of cattle, from half a dozen to a score. The graziers are thus enabled to classify their cattle, and keep them detached from those of others, without any trouble or difficulty. Along all the outside of the cattle part of the market is a strong wooden erection about three feet in height, to which the cattle which have not been pent up in the stands or pens, are fastened. There are also a sufficient number of pens for the sheep and pigs. Without these pens, it would be impossible for the various proprietors of cattle, sheep, and pigs, to keep their respective quadrupeds separate from those of others.

Smithfield Cattle-market is held twice a week. The days are Monday and Friday. The time for commencing business is about four o'clock in the morning. From that time till eight, the sales are continued with amazing briskness. The despatch with which London men of business generally get through their various transactions, is the surprise of every one who has had

an opportunity of observing it. In no case is this despatch more remarkable than in the bargains which take place between the London butchers and the graziers from the country. A price is put upon the various lots of cattle, sheep, &c.; they are taken at once, in most cases, at that price; or declined by the party wishing to purchase. If he thinks the price too high, he either proceeds to examine another lot without saying a word, or he makes an offer of what he would be willing to give. If the offer be deemed worthy of acceptance, it is accepted; if not, there is an end of the matter. Both buyers and sellers are wonderfully economical of their words. There is nothing deserving the name of huckstering in their transactions: a few words between buyer and seller are decisive. By eight o'clock you see a striking difference in the place: it is thinned to a very great extent both of cattle and of human beings. By ten o'clock the market may be said to be over; you see perhaps a few "beasts," as the drovers call them, lingering about here and there, just to remind you that there had been such a thing as a cattle-market in the place that morning.

The cattle with which Smithfield market is supplied are brought from all parts of the country. They are to be seen on their way to it, early in the morning of each market-day, in all the great roads leading to London. Some of them—those of course which belong to farmers or cattle-dealers in the inland parts of England, are driven 200 or 300 miles. The stages, however, are short; otherwise the cattle would suffer so much in appearance, that they would only fetch an inferior price. The present extensive use of steam communication with all parts of the country, has opened up new facilities for supplying the London market with cattle. Within the last two years, immense numbers are weekly brought up, in the summer season, in steam-vessels from Aberdeen, Banff, Morayshire, and indeed, from all the northern counties of Scotland, being a distance of from 550 to 600 miles.

As Smithfield market belongs to the corporation of the City of London, who exact a small toll on the various animals brought to the market, the average number is ascertained beyond

all doubt. The yearly revenue which the corporation are understood to derive from this source, is nearly 4000*l*. Speaking in round numbers, the average number of cattle brought to the market, is 1500; of calves, 400; of sheep, 12,000; and of pigs, 1200. I have seen some calculations, grounded on the above numbers of cattle, &c., which are sold every market-day, as to the quantity of butchers' meat which is weekly consumed in London. Assuming the average weight of the cattle to be 300 lbs., and the offal 200 lbs., which is the computation of the butchers, the weekly consumption of beef would be about 2,000,000 lbs. Supposing also the average weight of sheep were 80 lbs., and the offal 20 lbs., this would give a weekly consumption of mutton in London to the extent of 2,200,000 lbs. Of veal, supposing the calves to weigh 140 lbs., and the offal 35 lbs., the consumption every week would be about 60,000 lbs. With regard to the quantity of pork consumed, it is not so easy to form a conjecture, there being so great a difference in the size of pigs; but I think it may safely be assumed, that the

quantity would be at least a tenth part of that of mutton, or 220,000 lbs. per week. This would give, as the entire weekly consumption of butchers' meat in the metropolis, arising from cattle, &c., sold in Smithfield market, the immense quantity of 4,480,000 lbs. If to this were added the quantities of bacon, hams, tongues, and other salted meat, sent up from different parts of the country, we think we may safely say that the gross amount of butchers' meat consumed every week in London is very close on 5,000,000 lbs. The average yearly returns of Smithfield market are no less than 5,000,000*l*.

To see Smithfield market at the hour of the morning when the business of buying and selling is at its briskest, is a very interesting sight. In addition to the thousands of quadrupeds which appear before you, you see thousands of graziers, butchers, drovers of cattle, &c. &c., to say nothing of the multitudes of persons who are drawn to the spot through accidental circumstances. All is bustle and business. Cattle, sheep, and pigs, are every moment in the act of being driven out of the market by the butchers

who have bought them ; and the greater the room thus made in the market, the quicker are the movements of buyers, sellers, and those who have no special business to do, in going from place to place. But perhaps the liveliest scenes which are to be seen on a Monday or Friday morning, are those which are occasioned when a few "infuriated" oxen have taken it into their heads to fly off at a tangent from the drovers. They soon make a clear path for themselves. Parts of the market, or the openings of streets leading to it, which but a few moments before were so crammed with two-footed animals that you would have fancied it as reasonable a thing to suppose you could walk through the thickest hedge as through this dense forest of people, are deserted with amazing despatch, in order to make way for the enraged or affrighted oxen. Such scenes are very common ; and yet it is surprising how few accidents occur on such occasions. What must often also surprise the stranger is the circumstance of seeing so many large, powerful, and often very unmanageable cattle, driven hastily through the most populous streets

in town, on their way from Smithfield to the shambles of the butchers who have bought them. "A bull in a china-shop," is a proverbial expression. I have witnessed the scene on more than one occasion, and glorious has been the work of demolition among the crockery I have seen the animal make in an incredibly short time. The only thing for wonder is, that considering the cruel treatment the cattle receive at the hands of those who drive them out of Smithfield market, and the reckless way in which they are driven, so very few accidents of this kind should occur.

But it is not by the use of one's eyes alone that any one can form a right idea of what Smithfield market is on a Monday or Friday morning. To form such idea, the ear is a very necessary article. What between the oaths, and imprecations, and everlasting shouts of the drovers; the lowing of oxen; the roaring of bulls; the squeaking of pigs; and the bleating of sheep, one's auricular organs have, I may safely say, to undergo a much more severe trial in Smithfield market, than they would in almost any

other spot which could be mentioned in "this great globe of ours."

When purchases are effected in Smithfield market, the butchers, as already intimated, drive the cattle home to their respective slaughtering places. As the market is only held twice a-week, and as all the leading butchers must kill cattle every day, they are, of course, obliged to make three days' purchases at once. In the case of those who have the most extensive businesses as butchers, the number of cattle and sheep bought every market-day is necessarily great. A score of cattle, and five or six score of sheep, are often bought at once by some of the more extensive butchers. During the late war, when government contracts for supplying the navy with butchers' meat had to be fulfilled, the number bought each market-day was eight or ten times as great as I have stated.

It is in Smithfield market that the celebrated Bartholomew fair is held. This fair takes place every year in September, and lasts three days. To give it greater importance and *éclat*, it is always opened with much pomp and circum-

stance by a proclamation from the Lord Mayor. The scene presented in Smithfield market during the three days which Bartholomew fair lasts, is one to which no description could do justice. To have anything like an idea of it, it must be witnessed. Only fancy from 150,000 to 200,000 persons—men, women, and children—all assembled in one spot, and that not exceeding five acres of space, and then imagine you see an immense number of caravans, booths, &c., in the same place, at short distances from each other. And last of all, suppose your ears are assailed with all manner of the most discordant sounds, partly instrumental and partly vocal—the instrumental sounds being caused by drums, trumpets, and other noisy articles, put into requisition by the various showmen, with the view of attracting attention to their exhibitions; and the vocal, by the loud vociferations of the assembled crowd: fancy you see and hear all this, and you will be able to form such an idea of the scene exhibited in a Bartholomew fair as will satisfy you that no adequate conception of it can be formed without being present.

The scenes of cruelty here practised by the drovers towards the cattle, sheep, and pigs, are of the most shocking kind. No person of humane mind can pass through Smithfield on a Monday or Friday morning—especially on the former, as being the day of the largest market—without the greatest violence being done to his feelings, at the manner in which the poor animals are treated by the worse than savage men who have the care of them. The subject is too revolting to dwell upon. It is surprising that the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals does not exercise a more efficient vigilance over these persons.

BILLINGSGATE is the great metropolitan market for fish. The quantities of all kinds which daily arrive at this place, from all parts of the coast, are enormously great. It was thought that Hungerford would prove a formidable rival to it; but the fact has not turned out to be so. The fish department of Hungerford market has not more materially affected the business of Billingsgate, than has the vegetable

department injured Covent Garden market. Billingsgate market (which, for the information of strangers, I ought to mention is situated about a hundred yards below London Bridge) is seen, like all other metropolitan markets, to greatest advantage in the morning. From an early hour in the summer mornings, and from before daylight in the winter season, until nine o'clock, the place is crowded with boatmen, wholesale merchants, and the retail venders of the finny and shelly tribe from all parts of the metropolis.

A large proportion of those who crowd Billingsgate in the mornings, are women; some of whom are wholesale purchasers of fish. They are mostly, however, employed in various little offices connected with the market. Many women, as well as men, carry away on their heads, as large quantities of fish as their strength will enable them, to all parts of London. The more extensive fishmongers, however, convey their purchases to their respective shops in carts drawn by horses. By ten o'clock every part and portion of the

metropolis is abundantly supplied with all kinds of fish.

There is a general impression, that if families send direct to Billingsgate, they may procure any quantity or kind of fish they may wish much cheaper than at the retail shops. This is a mistake, if meant as a general fact. It is true, that they may, by sending direct to Billingsgate, get the articles they want cheaper than at the dearer class of retail shops; but there are many shops in all parts of London where articles may be got as good and almost as cheap, as at Billingsgate itself.

Everybody knows that when a person utters low or vituperative language, such a person is represented as talking Billingsgate. The origin of this is to be found in the fact, that at Billingsgate the fish-women are constantly abusing each other; and that there is a richness or raciness in their vituperation which are not to be met with in the squabbles and quarrels of any other class of persons in London.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE QUAKERS.

Their number—Their wealth—Their general success in business, and the causes thereof—Benevolence of the Quakers—Their activity in doing good—How the females employ their time at home—Their literary and scientific acquirements—Their dress—Their modes of speech—Their baptisms, marriages, and deaths—Domestic habits of the Quakers—Religious opinions and discipline—Their meeting-houses and public worship—Illustrative observations.

IN London there are two classes of persons whose manners and modes of life differ in various respects from those of the community in general. I allude to the Quakers and the Jews. In a work, therefore, undertaking to pourtray some of the more interesting and striking characteristics of metropolitan life, it will be necessary to devote a separate chapter to each of

these denominations. My present chapter will relate wholly to the Quakers; my next shall be appropriated to the Jews.

In a former work, "Travels in Town," I had occasion to make a passing allusion to the Quakers; and I there stated that their number in London, as nearly as can be ascertained, is about 2000. It may appear strange, that when their number is so limited, there should be any difficulty in ascertaining what the precise number is. The difficulty arises, as mentioned in the work just named, from the circumstance of its being one of their principles not to count their numbers.

The Quakers, as a body, are affluent persons. I have heard it said, indeed, that there are no poor people at all among them. This is a mistake: there are many poor persons among them; only the poverty of such persons does not appear so prominent as that of persons belonging to other denominations, because they are prevented, by the liberality of their brethren, from bringing their necessities before the public. There exist arrangements for providing

for the poor belonging to their community, which insure, at the least, nine shillings weekly to those who are entirely dependent on the benevolence of their brethren. It is right, however, to mention that those among the Quakers dependent on the charity of others are, relatively, much fewer in number than the poor of any other class of the community. This may be accounted for from a variety of circumstances; but chiefly from these—that all of them are most carefully trained up to business habits; that they are, in the regulations and yearly epistles of the society, cautioned against undertaking hazardous speculations of any kind, but especially speculations not justified by their means; and that moderation in eating and drinking, and economy in all their habits, are most urgently and systematically impressed upon them. The result of this is, that we very rarely hear of a Quaker failing in business, or being reduced from competence to want.

I have said that, as a body, the Quakers are rich. This fact must be evident to all who have ever had occasion to mingle with them, or to

know much of their circumstances through the representations of others. Take a hundred Friends—the name by which they wish to be called, that of Quakers being deemed a term of reproach—take, I say, a hundred Friends, at random; and take a hundred persons, also at random, from any other Christian denomination that can be named; and I will undertake to say, that the result of an inquiry into the wealth of the two bodies thus selected, will be that the aggregate wealth of the hundred Quakers is twice, most probably thrice, as great as that of the hundred individuals belonging to the other denominations of Christians from whom the number has been chosen.

It is due to the Society of Friends to say, that as they are much more wealthy than any other class of Christians in the country, so they are much more liberal in the charitable or benevolent use they make of their riches. Though there are no written rules or specific understanding among them, as to what proportion of their pecuniary means ought to be set apart for benevolent purposes, there is an almost universal

conviction in the Society, that a very considerable portion of their income ought to be so appropriated. I feel convinced, from a rather intimate knowledge of their acts of charity, that scarcely any of their number fall short of the old Jewish rule, of setting apart a tenth of their income to such purposes. Many of them—chiefly, however, those who are unmarried—consecrate at least one-half of their means to purposes of mercy and benevolence.

The Quakers are the life and soul of all institutions not sectarian, but contemplating the well-being of the human race, and based on those broad principles of benevolence which must commend themselves to the judgment and hearts of all men. The Societies which existed previous to 1834 for the extinction of West India slavery, were mainly supported by members of the Society of Friends. The present Anti-Slavery Societies are also chiefly supported by Quaker funds. The World's Convention, which assembled in London last year for the purpose of abolishing slavery in America and throughout the world, was of Quaker parentage. The same

may be said of the "Aborigines' Protection Society;" while, with regard to the "Society for the Diffusion of Information on Capital Punishments," it was not only of Quaker origin, but has been almost exclusively, up to the present hour, supported by Quaker liberality. I might apply the same remarks to various other humane and benevolent societies now in active operation in the metropolis.

The life of a Quaker is one unvarying round of activity. There is no such thing as an indolent Quaker to be met with. Such a person would be an anomaly. Laziness is looked upon by the body as an absolute vice. To do nothing, is regarded by them as being only less criminal in a moral point of view, than committing an act of positive delinquency. The Quakers are constantly engaged either in their own private business, or in matters bearing on the welfare of their fellow-men. They are trained up to business habits from their infancy. Even the richest of their number article their sons to some one branch of business or other; while needle-work is made an essential part of the education

of their young females, however rich may be their parents. The latter are not permitted to learn any of those fashionable branches of education so much in vogue among the rest of the community. Music and dancing are strictly prohibited. The acquisition of languages is not so; but it is not encouraged. Drawing is allowed; because it may be converted to useful purposes. And here I may remark, that the great object of Quaker education, whether in the male or female branches of the denomination, is to fit the learner for becoming a useful member of society. That object is never lost sight of; to it all things else must be rendered subservient. Mere show, so gratifying to the natural mind and pleasing to the eye, is proscribed. So are all public amusements. A Quaker never enters a theatre; nor any public place where the object and tendency of what is to be heard or seen are not to humanize the mind, or improve the morals. It may be asked, then, in what way do Quakeresses employ their time so as to prevent its hanging heavy on their hands? They employ a large portion of it in attending to the ordinary

duties of domestic life; and the remainder is filled up in reading and needle-work. The young Quakeresses are great readers. They are intimately acquainted with history, biography, and other branches of useful literature. To poetry of a decidedly moral and humanizing tendency, they are exceedingly partial. Three of their favourite poets of the present day, are, Montgomery, Campbell, and Wordsworth. "The Pleasures of Hope" by Campbell, and all the more moral and pathetic pieces of Wordsworth and Montgomery, are familiar as household words in Quaker families. Mrs. Alaric Watts, indeed, and she ought to be a competent authority, having herself been brought up in their community—tells us that here is scarcely a female Quaker to be met with, who has attained the age of seventeen, that cannot repeat from memory, nearly every word of the "Pleasures of Hope" and of the favourite pieces of the other poets I have just named. All poetry, however, no matter how good, that is not strictly pure in morals as well as amiable in feeling, is strictly excluded from the houses of

Quakers. It will not, after mentioning this, surprise my readers to be informed, that the works of Shakspeare, Byron, Moore, and many other popular poets I need not name, are never suffered to cross the threshold of a Quaker's residence; neither are they ever seen by a Quaker's eye, except in those cases in which they happen to come accidentally before them in detached passages, in reviews and other publications. I am aware that Mr. William Howitt, in an article in "Tait's Magazine," speaks of the familiarity of young female "Friends" with the poetry of Byron and Moore. Mr. Howitt, having himself belonged to the Quaker body, and still retaining a modified connexion with them, ought to be deemed a competent authority on the point; but it appears to me that, though his observations are correct in reference to some of his female Quaker acquaintances—on the principle that there are exceptions to every rule—he has unguardedly given them a general application unjustified by the facts of the case.

To such an extent is the reading of useful books carried on among the young Quakeresses,

that in families where there are several females, the almost invariable practice is for one to read aloud while the others are engaged in needle-work.

And here it is right to remark, that the reading of the female portion of the Society of Friends is not confined to popular literature or poetry. They have a great taste for scientific pursuits. And the extent of the acquisitions of many of their number in matters of science is wonderfully great. Natural history, geology, and botany, are three of their favourite subjects. On each of these, but especially the latter, the extent and accuracy displayed by many Quaker females not yet emerged from their teens, would suffice to qualify for a professor's chair, did not their sex forbid. The correctness of Quaker knowledge, indeed, on all subjects which they have made their special study, is surprising.

And the observation, it is proper to state, applies equally to both sexes. I have often been amazed at the singular accuracy of their information. You never catch them tripping. Their facts are always *facts* ; their representations are

rarely erroneous. And yet, notwithstanding the surpassing intelligence of the Quaker community, they never parade their knowledge. Display of any kind, or under any circumstances, is equally foreign to their feelings and their principles. It is only when circumstances impose a kind of moral necessity upon them to reveal their acquaintance with science or literature, that you discover the extent and variety of their acquirements.

The Quakers use none of the complimentary salutations of the day. They never address any one as Mr. or Mrs. Neither do they ever add esquire to any name, because that would imply a superiority over others, which it would be at variance with their principles to acknowledge. They are in society what republicans are in politics. It is difficult for them, however, at all times to reduce their notions of perfect equality to practice. In fact, some of themselves admit that there is a practical aristocracy among them; that is to say, that some of the wealthier classes among them evince a distance and reserve in their demeanour towards their humbler brethren and

sisters which but ill assorts with their theoretical notions of equality. A very rich Quaker is scarcely ever to be seen walking arm in arm with a very poor "Friend." And were a poor young man in their community, to ask in marriage the daughter of a wealthy person, his conduct would be looked on as a piece of unpardonable presumption.

But this is a slight digression. Though the Quakers will not, in speaking of or writing to any person, use the honorary prefix of Mr. or Mrs., or add the honorary epithet of esquire to any one's name, they do speak of persons of consideration in the world as "gentlemen" and "ladies." Neither have they any conscientious scruples against giving noblemen their usual titles; these being distinctions originally conferred by the sovereign, recognised by the law, and descending hereditarily from the parents to the children. If they have occasion to speak of the sovereign, they call her the queen or the monarch; but they will not on any account use the expression of "gracious majesty." In like manner, though they call a

duke, a duke, they will not address him as "your grace."

They never subscribe themselves at the conclusion of their letters, the "obedient servants," or "humble servants," of any one. "Thy friend," is a common concluding phrase where the party addressed and the party writing are not intimate together. Where they are on terms of frequent and familiar intercourse, or any particular friendship subsists between them, the usual expression with which a Quaker concludes his epistle, is "Sincerely thine." In commencing a letter the usual phrase is, where no friendship has previously existed between the parties, "Respected friend." This expression is synonymous with our abrupt and harsh way of beginning a letter with "Sir." Where the parties are on intimate and friendly terms, the commencing salutation is, "Esteemed friend," or "My esteemed friend." The first phrase is tantamount to our "Dear sir;" the second to our "My dear sir." When they meet they shake hands, and express a hope that they see each other well; and then, if either

party be the head of a family, a similar hope is expressed, "that thy family are all well." When they part, they content themselves with the brief apostolic benediction, "Farewell," accompanied by a cordial shake of the hand.

There is nothing in which the Quakers, male and female, are more distinguished from the rest of the community, than their dress. You can, from their peculiar costume, invariably distinguish between a Quaker or Quakeress and all other classes of society, by a glance of your eye, as you pass along the streets. The broad-brimmed hat, and their collarless and green-coloured coat, are invariable characteristics of the men. The women are infallibly and readily distinguished from women of other classes of the community, by their plain, ribbonless, drab-coloured bonnets; their grey silk gowns, and their light shawls. Though Quaker attire be thus in harmonious keeping with the simplicity and peacefulness of the Quaker character, it ought not to be forgotten that all their apparel is of the very best quality; that their wardrobes if not varied are most ample; and that

the greatest attention is paid by both sexes to their toilet. Whoever saw a male "Friend" whose clothes did not fit him to a nicety, or in whose apparel a single stain was discernible. As for the female Quakers again, their attire is the perfection of neatness; while there is a clean and virgin purity in its very aspect, which must strike every eye and captivate every taste. Perhaps some persons may be curious to know whether, as there is so great a sameness in the apparel of the "Friends," there be any rule or regulation among them which prescribes uniformity of dress. I remember having once asked the question of one of themselves. The answer was, that there are no injunctions of any kind on the subject of dress, beyond the general recommendation that they should observe simplicity in their attire. They are all therefore left to dress as they please; and the only consideration that operates in producing the uniformity observable among them is, that if any one were to deviate from it, he would be looked upon with a suspicious eye by the rest of his brethren and sisters, as one that was very likely to deviate from

the body in some more essential matter ; possibly in regard either to doctrine or discipline.

The Quakers do not observe the form of baptism in any way. Those who know anything of their religious tenets, are aware that they do not believe in water baptism at all, or in any other baptism than that of the Spirit. There is, however, a vague impression in the minds of many, that they have some sort of substitute for baptism in so far as the giving of names to their children is concerned. This is an error. It is true their children receive their names, as in the case of other classes of the community, in infancy ; and indeed, as will be presently seen, at a much earlier period than the children of any other body of Christians. In the giving of names to their offspring, the Quakers observe the singular simplicity which is so generally characteristic of them. Soon after the child is born, the medical man and the nurse officiating at the accouchment, severally give a written attestation according to a form penned for the purpose, to the time of the child's birth ; and it is for the parents then to say what the name of

their new-born babe shall be. They mention the name John, or Sarah, or whatever name they prefer; and an entrance is made in the registry to the effect that John Savory, or Sarah Sturge, was born in a particular house on a particular day.

The same simplicity observed in the giving of names to their children, is also observed in Quaker marriages. This absence of form or ceremony, however, in the matter of marriage, is not suffered to interfere with due precautions being taken that the marriage is a suitable and proper one. No marriage ever, or at least very rarely, takes place without the concurrence of the parents of both parties. If the parents are not present, their written concurrence must be produced. When a "young couple," to use a very popular phrase, have agreed to be united together in the bonds of matrimony, and when it has been resolved that the marriage shall take place as soon as practicable, the first step to be taken is that of each party, the bride and bridegroom—terms, however, which I ought to remark are unknown among the Quaker body—

announcing at the first monthly meeting their intentions of becoming man and wife. They each make the intimation, first to the male and then to the female, monthly meeting. The female says, "It is my intention, if the Lord will, to take George Barclay," or whatever her lover's name may be, "to be my husband." And the male party makes a similar announcement in these words, "It is my intention, if the Lord will, to take Sarah Darton," or whatever the name may be, "to be my wife." One would suppose that it would require no ordinary share of courage on the part of a young lady to make this intimation in a public assembly. It is not so, however. The thing is regarded as a point of duty, and is performed accordingly, as any other duty would be, without any visible confusion or embarrassment, even by the most modest, most timid, or most retiring young female. A committee is then appointed by each of the meetings to inquire whether or not either of the parties have made any previous engagement, or whether any valid reason exists why the two should not be matrimonially joined to-

gether. The committee appointed by the male monthly meeting confines its inquiries into the previous conduct and present position of the bridegroom; while the committee appointed by the female monthly meeting, do the same in the case of the bride. Each committee reports at the next monthly meeting. The report being favourable, and no objection being stated by the friends, both parties are, without the slightest ceremony being observed, publicly recognised as man and wife; and their names as such are entered on the register. The parents, however, or any one else that can give a valid reason against the union of the parties, have it in their power to object to the marriage up till the moment of their being declared man and wife. And repeated instances have occurred in which, at the very latest moment the father of the lady has started up, and, by objecting to the marriage, put it off altogether.

Such a thing as a breach of promise of marriage, is scarcely ever known among "Friends." It is not denied that matrimonial engagements are sometimes formed and afterwards broken

off ; but these cases are exceedingly rare ; and even when they do occur, they are always, through the intervention of the parents, prevented from being publicly brought before the body generally. One circumstance which contributes in a very great degree, to prevent the violation of marriage engagements, is that of the society refusing its sanction to marriage with any other person, to the party breaking the contract ; unless, indeed, the most satisfactory reason can be assigned for its violation.

From Quaker marriages, let me now make a transition to Quaker deaths. On this point I have only one or two observations to make. When a Quaker dies, the survivors, though of course feeling their loss as sensibly as any other class of the community in similar circumstances, make no outward manifestations of mourning. In their shops, the event is not indicated by the wholly or partially closed shutters ; nor would you, in passing along their private residences, discover by the curtained windows that a member of the family lay lifeless within. The women, as well as the male

members and relatives of the family, follow the body to the burial place. No regular address is delivered over the grave; but such addresses are occasionally to be heard when the Spirit moves some one or other of the persons present. This may be either a woman or a man. And instances are not wanting—I myself know one of recent occurrence—in which a woman has spoken at considerable length immediately on her husband's remains having been consigned to the narrow house. The Quakers do not clothe themselves in the habiliments of mourning on the death of their friends; their apparel is in all respects the same after as before their bereavement.

The routine of Quaker domestic life is exceedingly simple, and, with the exception of Sundays and the days of their public meetings, is the same all the year round. They rise early. To be later in their beds than six in the summer season, and seven in the winter, would be deemed a matter for self-reproach. In many Quaker families, breakfast is on the table by seven o'clock. None of the body, so far as

my observation extends, breakfast at a later hour than eight. After breakfast some member of the family reads a portion of the Scriptures; generally from two to three chapters. This is the only family worship, if indeed it deserve the name, which they observe. Neither is there any individual audible prayer among them. They perform closet or private worship, but it is by prayer of a mental kind. All is still, as if there were no individual in the room. Breakfast over, the active duties of the day are commenced. The male portion quit their houses, and proceed to their respective places of business; while the females, except where they have to go out on visits to the sick or poor, or on some other errand of benevolence, remain at home, and occupy that portion of their time not required by their domestic duties, in needlework, reading, stitching tracts and pamphlets, for gratuitous distribution, on religious and benevolent subjects. Sometimes you will see their tables loaded with publications of this nature. Then there is their correspondence with friends on matters con-

nected with the interests of themselves as a community, or of humanity generally. The "Friends" are excellent correspondents. They are exceedingly punctual, exceedingly pleasant, and exceedingly ample in the utterance of their feelings and affections, in all their written communications. The dinner hour arrives. With some the hour is two, with some three; and in no instance, I believe, later than four; except where considerations of a business nature, or the absence of the head of a family, render it desirable it should be at a more advanced period of the day. Quaker dinners are always ample, and everything is of the best quality. Yet they are exceedingly simple. There is little even in the wealthiest families, that could be classed under the head of luxuries; neither is there much variety. I am speaking at present of their usual family dinners. When a few friends, however, are invited, there is considerable variety, as well as everything of the very choicest description. Wines of different kinds, and of the very best quality that can be procured, are laid on the table; except in those cases

where the head of the family is a teetotaller. And here I must remark, that if ever a class of individuals on earth needed less than another, on their own account, to adopt teetotal principles and follow teetotal practices, that class is the Society of Friends. They are a remarkably temperate people ; a single glass or two of wine, is usually the utmost extent to which they go. A Quaker seriously affected by liquor, is a sight which is not to be witnessed. It is right, I should here mention, that the Quakers drink no toasts ; not even the standard one of " Your good health ; " neither do they use the expression of " Happy to drink wine with you." If another party, not of their community, propose to drink wine with one of their members, the latter will take up his glass and put it to his lips ; which is the utmost length to which the Quakers go in conforming to the usages of general society at the dinner-table. The Quakers never use ardent spirits, except medicinally. Brandy and rum-and-water are things unknown in their houses. Dessert follows dinner whenever there are friends dining. And

very excellent and very ample a Quaker dessert always is; that is to say, assuming that the Quaker desserts of which I have partaken are fair samples of what are given by the wealthier portion of the body generally. Tea and coffee follow dinner, at an interval of about three hours; but suppers, in the general acceptance of the term, are scarcely known among the "Friends." They never say grace audibly, either before or after meat. When dinner, or whatever other meal it may be, is laid on the table, the master of the house drops his head in solemn silence for about half-a-minute, and his resuming an erect posture is the signal for commencing operations.—So much for Quaker meals.

A word or two now as to the interior of their houses. They are all furnished in a style of elegant simplicity. It may be supposed, that the two qualities, elegance and simplicity, cannot be blended together; no one will remain of that opinion after being in a Quaker house of the better sort. If the furniture be not ornamental, it is all made of the very best

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material, and is of the very best workmanship. If there be no superfluity, neither, on the other hand, is there any bareness or deficiency. And this remark applies to every apartment in their houses. It is not their dining or drawing-rooms only, that are tastefully and liberally appointed; their bedrooms are equally so. And then as regards the article of cleanliness, the Quaker houses need not shrink from a comparison with the most costly and splendid mansions in the land; in fact, so far as my observation goes, there are very few of the residences of our nobility that are so clean throughout as are the generality of Quaker houses. There is, too, an atmosphere of comfort in and about the latter, which I have often thought is peculiar to their dwellings. Their houses are remarkable for the order which prevails in them; everything is in its proper place. If the science of phrenology be founded in truth and there be a bump of order, that bump must be largely developed in the head of every "Friend."

The "Friends" give no parties of pleasure, in the sense in which the phrase is usually under-

stood. Real friendship, and not idle unmeaning display, is the feeling which prompts their invitations to partake of their hospitality. At table, the conversation never assumes a trifling turn ; far less does it ever degenerate into scandal ; not even among the females. Ridicule and abuse are strictly forbidden among the body. The conversation always partakes, more or less, of a useful character. It usually increases the stock of some one's intelligence, if not that of all present ; while its inevitable tendency is to improve the mind.

The Quakers never play at cards or dice. Indeed they play at no game at all, under any circumstances, for money. The only games ever played at by them are chess or the draughts ; and these only by the younger branches of the family—and by them ,but very rarely—as trials of skill.

There is a very general impression, that there is something unpleasantly demure in the Quaker character. There never was a greater mistake ; as every one who is acquainted with the body will be forward to testify. They are a sin-

gularly cheerful people. There is a placidity in their dispositions, and a pleasantness in their manner, as well as an expression of mildness in their countenances, which are remarkably agreeable to those who, like myself, have had occasion to be a good deal in their society. Whoever yet saw a frown in a Quaker's face? Whoever heard a harsh word proceed from a Quaker's lips? Whoever witnessed the performance of an oppressive or unkindly action by a "Friend?" How then could their company and conversation be otherwise than pleasant. Nor is this all. Many of their number have a nice and quick perception of the humorous, and can relish harmless humour. They can, moreover, make an innocent joke at the proper time and place, as well as enjoy the harmless jokes of others. It is right, however, to say that they studiously guard against indulging in much jocularity.

The Quakers are sincere in whatever they say. Their declining to use complimentary expressions when speaking or writing to others, is a circumstance which of itself affords pre-

sumptive proof of this. But the fact must be established to the satisfaction of all who have mixed largely with them. They are, as a body, rigidly honest in their dealings. They would not take advantage of a child. With regard to their word, again, they are scrupulous observers of it, even in matters which others would consider the most trivial. Once get the word of a Quaker, and you may depend on it as confidently as you would do on the most solemn and most binding of written obligations.

So much for the Quakers considered in their individual capacities, and as members of society. It remains, in order to the completion of my portraiture of the body, that I advert for a short time to them as a religious community.

The doctrinal opinions of the "Friends" may be stated in a few words. I have already incidentally mentioned that they do not believe in water baptism; neither do they believe in the propriety of externally observing the Lord's supper. They indeed observe no ordinances at all. They are decided Arminians. They discard entirely the doctrine of predestination, and

contend for the free-agency of man in its fullest and most unrestricted sense. They are strenuous advocates of the Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection in the present life. Indeed, they go farther, if that were possible, than even the Wesleys themselves, in the assertion of this doctrine. On the subject of the atonement, they complain that their views are often misrepresented. They have been charged with holding a species of Arianism ; but they themselves distinctly and decidedly repudiate the charge. And yet, in reading some of their works, and in conversing with some of themselves on the subject, I have frequently fancied that I missed the atonement of Christ,—not certainly altogether—but in all that fulness and prominence which it ought to possess in every exposition of theological views. I remember once asking one of the most intelligent of their number, what were the principles of the “ Friends ” in reference to the person and work of Jesus. And his answer was, “ We are not Socinians nor Arians on these points.” Still the impression was left on my mind—it may however be, and I hope it is, an

erroneous one—that the Quakers have not those exalted views of the Deity and work of the Saviour, which are entertained by the evangelical clergy in the Establishment and by the great body of Dissenters. One leading and distinctive doctrine of the “Friends,” is that of the sufficiency and safety of the inward light; which is but another expression for the inspiration of the Spirit. They set up this inward light as superior to the outward light of revelation, though they profess great homage for the latter; and in those cases where their inward light comes into collision with the revealed word of God, they unhesitatingly resign themselves to the guidance of the former. I am aware that in America, and in some parts of the provinces of our own country, serious differences,—ending in some instances in divisions, and in others threatening to do so—have taken place among the Quakers on this very point. But to these differences I will not particularly refer, as the great Quaker doctrine undoubtedly is, that the inward light is superior to the written word. And to this conviction all the “Friends” in

London—and it is with them only I have at present to do—steadily adhere.

The discipline of the Quakers is essentially different from that of all other bodies of Christians. They have three great meetings; a monthly, a quarterly, and a yearly meeting. Every congregation, if I may use the term in speaking of the “Friends,” has its monthly meeting, at which all in the habit of attending the particular place of worship, have a right to be present and to vote on every question brought forward. The quarterly meetings are much larger and of a much more important character. They consist of all the monthly meetings in a particular district of the country. The yearly meeting is the largest and most important of all. It consists of deputations of the leading members from all the quarterly meetings throughout the United Kingdom. It is at these yearly meetings, which are always held in London, in the spring, that the annual epistle to the body is prepared and adopted. Here, in a word, everything relating to the denomination as a whole, is resolved on. The yearly meeting is a sort of annual

parliament, usually sitting daily, Sundays excepted, for about a fortnight, and whatever decisions it comes to, are adopted and obeyed as implicitly by the body generally, as are the measures by the nation which are passed by the civil Legislature. From some incidental statements already made, it will have been inferred that the female Quakers have meetings of their own contemporaneous with those of our sex. These they hold in a large apartment adjoining that in which the male meetings take place. Their proceedings relate exclusively to the conduct of their own sex, and to matters affecting themselves as females. With their proceedings the male meeting does not interfere; neither do they with the proceedings of the men; except that deputations are sometimes sent from the one meeting to the other when matters affecting both sexes alike, happen to come under consideration. In such cases they consult each other, and conjointly canvass the merits of particular measures. No male is allowed, on any account, to enter the female meeting, unless specially deputed for the purpose, and even then not without permis-

sion specially asked and expressly obtained. The same remark holds good in the case of the women. They must not enter the meeting of the men, except under the circumstances I have just mentioned. Mr. Howitt, in the article already referred to, says that the rights of the women in these meetings are equal to those of the men. This is not exactly correct. They have, it is true, the sole jurisdiction in matters appertaining to their own sex; but they have not the right of making new laws or issuing new regulations affecting the body generally. That is a privilege peculiar to the male meetings. A yearly meeting of Quakeresses is ~~one~~ of the most interesting sights which can be witnessed. Of course, as I have not been at any such meeting—neither, indeed, have many of the male members of their own body, I am obliged to make this statement on the authority of others. I have seen enough, however, of female assemblages of Quakers, not only to justify me in making the statement, but to enable me to form some idea of what such a scene must be. I had an opportunity, day after day, in common

with others, of seeing large numbers of Quakeresses at the Convention held last year for the abolition of slavery throughout the world; and was very much struck with the obvious union which their countenances exhibited of a variety of qualities, some of which might be supposed incompatible with each other. In their faces were to be seen indications, not to be mistaken, of mildness, piety, benevolence, and delicacy, and that retiring modesty so attractive in female character, blended with a fixedness of resolution, a patience of endurance, and a moral courage, which proclaimed, in loud though unuttered accents, that nothing on earth should divert them from their philanthropic purposes until they had accomplished the great enterprise in which they had embarked. But let Mr. Howitt describe an assemblage of female Quakeresses at one of their own yearly meetings; he having derived his information from Mrs. Howitt, who has been a member of one of these meetings. Mr. Howitt, or rather Mrs. Howitt, speaking through the medium of his pen, thus graphically describes one of these female yearly meetings:—

“ But we have not yet seen the women Friends in the midst of their deliberations. There they are, nevertheless, all this time, in their own court, engaged in deep discussion on all that affects their female policy ; weighing their moral or religious growth or retrogression ; admonishing on the past, taking measures for the future, with as much gravity, ability, and tact, as their brethren can show in theirs. Vain, however, would be all our desires to take a peep into this peaceful Amazonian republic, into this forum of fair pleaders, were it not for the kind intervention of one of their body. Such an obliging Friend now sits on our right hand ; and she tells us that nothing in this whole assembly struck her so much on her first visit to it, as the array of stately forms and fine heads displayed by the more patronly part of the assembly ; that the sight of such a company of ladies—a company completely filling a large meeting-house from side to side and end to end, all dressed in the same style of simple elegance, and all quietly attending to the transaction of their affairs, had something very novel and interesting in it ; and

that the ministers and elders, and other matronly women, had a dowager-like air and dignity about them that was quite peculiar, with a placid purity of countenance that few dowagers of the fashionable world could lay any claim to. The full and portly forms of many of them, seemed to speak of easy and even Sybaritic lives, of good tables, soft couches, and carriages of smoothest locomotion. Their countenances had a freshness and a freedom from spots, or wrinkles, or any such thing, at a very advanced age, that was truly surprising, and told of an existence that had passed like a velvet dream, free from all tyrant passions and vehement emotions. We have seen countenances among them that are the finest of their kind that can be imagined; such ample and well-chiselled features, such fine expansions of forehead, scorning every false and meretricious ornament, the silver hairs of age in all their honest simplicity showing themselves only around them. Others again, with a stern and masculine style of countenance, cold, determined, commanding women, who have left their homes and crossed the seas, and traversed wil-

dernesses in a sense of duty, which would shrink from nothing which it deemed to be demanded of it; masculine intellects in female forms, yet without the softness impressed by feminine feelings; heads and features which filled you, while you looked on them, with strange ideas of Spartan mothers, or the conceptions of Michael Angelo; and which, indeed, it would have been worth anything for a painter or a sculptor to behold. Others, again, of a Raphael character; faces full of the softest, blandest feelings, souls of womanly affection; eyes large and liquid, that beamed with tenderness; piety, that in softest tones dropped words of sympathy which fell like dew. The weather was warm, and our fair Friend found these ladies sitting unbonnetted, so that they were seen to great advantage; for while like a coiffure of the strictest simplicity and great uniformity, the plainest Quaker cap gave a sameness to the continued line of heads, their individuality of character, of feature and expression, was only the more strongly brought out."

This, I am convinced, is not less vivid than

accurate colouring. Neither the male nor female Quakers ever choose any president or chairman at their meetings. They are all on a footing of perfect equality. The only person who has distinctive duties to perform at these meetings is the clerk. He takes a minute of the proceedings, and, when one part of the business is done, announces the next subject which awaits their deliberation. No speeches are allowed; nothing in the shape of address, except simple statement of facts—and then always in the fewest possible words—that may be necessary for the general understanding of the matter to be decided on. A figure of speech, a flower of rhetoric, scarcely indeed an argument beyond what was embodied in a simple statement of facts—was ever known to grace the proceedings of Quaker meetings for business. No attempt is ever made to stir up the passions: the heart is assumed to be in that state, and the feelings in that frame, that all that is necessary to insure a proper course of action is the enlightenment of the mind. Everything at these meetings is calm, quiet, subdued,

sedate. The only thing anomalous in the proceedings at their business meetings, is the circumstance of the majority giving way to the minority, whenever there happens to be a different opinion as to what decision ought to be come to on any question which has been under discussion. In all such cases the invariable practice is, for one or two of those who possess the greatest moral weight in the body—and there are such persons among the Quakers as well as in every other denomination—to get up and say what decision they think should be come to, or what course adopted. All conflicting opinions are that instant reconciled, at least in effect, and the wishes of the one or two such individuals are adopted at once by the meeting at large.

It is a fact, which is worthy of being mentioned in connexion with the transactions of Quaker business, that their sub-committees and deputations invariably consist of two persons and no more. Experience, they assure me, has abundantly convinced them of the wisdom of this regulation, which is one of the many en-

lightened suggestions of their founder, George Fox.

The Quakers exercise a most vigilant superintendence over the moral conduct of each other. The least impropriety is first privately pointed out; and then, if that be not effectual, is brought before the monthly meeting. If the party at fault does not promise amendment, and otherwise afford the meeting satisfaction, his excommunication will be certain and speedy. And it is impossible for a "Friend," expelled from one congregation or meeting, ever to get into another in any other part of the country, or indeed of the world; for it is one of the laws of the Society, that no one shall be admitted into communion with a new meeting whose certificate is not forwarded by the meeting with which he was previously connected to that which he is desirous of joining.

The Quakers make no efforts to proselytise others to their communion. They willingly, however, receive persons anxious to join them, provided the candidates for connexion with them come through the fiery ordeal, in the shape

of examination of their principles and inquiries into their conduct, to which they are subjected. I know several of their leading men who have been brought up in other communions.

The Quakers take no part in purely religious missionary work, either at home or abroad. I once expressed, to one of their number, my surprise at this, they being so decidedly pious a people and so active in works of general benevolence. He told me at once the reason: it is that their principle of never speaking except when the Spirit moves them, disqualifies them for missionary work, as they could never depend on being able to preach or pray in public at any appointed time.

Having thus endeavoured to pourtray the Quaker character, in his habits of private life, and as a member of the community to which he belongs, let me now make some observations illustrative of his views and practices, in reference to his public worship of the Supreme Being.

Among the "Friends" there are no persons, as among other denominations, who are paid to

lead the public worship of the body. Indeed they have no paid servants at all, with the single exception of the clerk of their meetings. It is essential to their notions of religion, that every one shall render services which are purely religious, without fee or reward. They do not, however, stretch this opinion so far as to refuse to pay any actual expenses, such as coach-hire, &c., which may be incurred by any individual of their body in travelling from place to place to promote its interests; but beyond the bare expenses he receives nothing: and it is only those of the poorer class who will ever, in such cases, accept of money. Though, however, the Quakers have no paid ministers, they nevertheless have their regularly recognised ministers. Any one, man or woman, may, it is true, preach or pray whenever he or she chooses; but there is very little of this among the general body. Whatever audible worship there is in their meetings, is almost always performed by one of their ministers, male or female; all of whom sit in a cross seat at the farthest end of the meeting-house. Ministers are chosen from among

those who have previously been found on those occasions on which the Spirit moved them to speak, to have done so with greatest satisfaction to the body. It is proper, however, to mention that there is no form of ordaining or setting apart these persons to the work of the ministry. A simple intimation is made to them that their addresses or prayers are generally acceptable. If others however should, which is seldom the case, fancy themselves qualified for the office of minister, and should, under that impression (the feeling of the meeting being different), persevere in speaking in public, a message is conveyed to them that their exhortations or prayers are not deemed edifying, accompanied by the expression of a hope, that under these circumstances they will in future desist from audible worship. Such a message so conveyed rarely fails of its desired effect. If it should, an expression of the disapprobation of the meeting is afterwards made in such decided terms, as leaves the party no other alternative but to yield to its wishes.

In my farther observations respecting the

public worship of the Quakers, I will not proceed in a methodical manner, but allow my readers to glean a knowledge of their mode of public worship from a description of one of their meetings, which I wrote ten months ago, immediately after my return from the meeting. I shall give what I then wrote without any other than an occasional verbal alteration.

Of the mode of worship practised by the Quakers, very little is known by other denominations of Christians. It is true that the idea of the prevalence of silence in an unusual degree and for an unusual period, is associated with it; but beyond that, scarcely any notion is formed of the mode or nature of Quaker worship. A few days ago I was invited by an intimate friend, who has been for many years one of the most active and influential individuals among the Quaker body, to attend one of their meetings for Divine worship, to be held in White Hart Court, Gracechurch Street, at a given hour on a particular evening. I jocularly remarked that I would willingly attend the meeting, provided he would guarantee to

me that it should not prove a Quaker meeting in a double sense ; that is, a meeting which should be characterised by nothing but its silence at the beginning, middle, and end. My reference was to the circumstance of many of the meetings of the Society of Friends being held for Divine worship, without a single word being uttered, by any one present, from the commencement to the close of the service ; if, indeed, that can be called a service in which there is no visible and united worship of the Divine Being. My friend at first answered that he could not make a positive promise that there would be any audible address to the congregation ; but on my remarking that I should feel much disappointed if I went so great a distance as from Lincoln's Inn Fields to Gracechurch Street, and not hear anything after all,—he expressed a presumption that I should not only hear an address, but an address from a particular lady, whom he was most anxious that I should have an opportunity of listening to, on the occasion. I did hear the lady in question ; and shall presently advert to the mode and

manner of the address she delivered, and the prayer she offered up to the throne of mercy.

The number of persons present may have been about four hundred, of whom a considerable portion were strangers. Among the latter there was perhaps a preponderance of Jews. At the farther end of the meeting-house (the Quakers never apply the term chapel to their places of worship), there was a large pew elevated three or four feet above the floor, and extending from one side of the meeting-house to the other. A division was made in the centre by which the female members were separated from the members of our sex; and each division of this pew (if that be the proper name by which to call it) had an entrance of its own. Five male members sat on the left side, and seven female members on the right side, fronting the congregation. These were the ministers. The congregation were ranged into two great divisions; the females all sitting on one side and the males on the other. The hour at which the service was announced to commence was six o'clock; but for at least twenty-five minutes after that hour,

not a whisper was heard, nor the slightest indication afforded of any coming visible worship. An unbroken silence prevailed, and anything more solemn than that stillness, it were impossible for any one to imagine who has not been present at any of the religious meetings of the Quaker body. After the lapse of nearly half-an-hour, and when the strangers present must have been beginning to despair of hearing a syllable, one of the lady ministers took off her bonnet, and, laying it on the seat, offered up a brief but singularly beautiful prayer; and the beauty of its sentiment, and the devotion which it breathed, were greatly increased by the almost angelic accents in which she spoke. In the sweetness of its tones and the music of its cadences, her voice was so unlike anything I had ever before heard, though I have been present at the vocal performances of the most distinguished female singers of the present day, that I could scarcely persuade myself that what I heard was uttered by mortal lips. And the aspect of the lady's countenance was in perfect keeping with the cultivated intellect, the fervent piety, and

the surpassing sweetness of voice which her approach to the throne of grace displayed. I use not the language of exaggeration when I say, that in the expression of mingled mildness, solemnity, and cheerfulness which that countenance exhibited, there was something which must have seemed to every stranger present to partake much more of heaven than of earth.

The lady having resumed her seat, another season of solemn stillness ensued, which lasted from fifteen to twenty minutes. Another lady, the one who was seated next to her who had opened the visible worship of the evening, then rose, and, having laid aside her bonnet, which she had a moment before taken off, proceeded to address the meeting. She did not formally announce any text, but her first words were the well-known passage in the Revelations, relating to one of the most interesting visions of the apostle John during his solitary sojourn in the isle of Patmos, in which "the voice" said, "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for

evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter."

Taking these words as a sort of motto or text, the speaker proceeded to address the audience, but without any formal division of her subject, as is usual among the preachers in other denominations; and indeed without confining herself very closely to the subject to which the passage relates. For at least half-an-hour she spoke with great talent and intelligence, without a moment's pause or the slightest appearance of difficulty. I was equally surprised and pleased at the depth of thought, the intimate acquaintance with Scripture, the eminent spirituality and strong practical tendency, which her discourse displayed. Even if regarded merely as an intellectual effort or a piece of composition, it could not fail to command the attention and elicit the admiration of every person who heard it.

It were impossible to imagine a more marked contrast than the appearance of the two Quaker

ladies exhibited. I have already alluded to the singularly musical voice and the almost angelic countenance and manner of the former. The latter spoke in a powerful though not stentorian voice. There was a breadth and fulness in some of her tones which I have rarely known in a lady speaker. She spoke with a degree of energy and decision of manner which clearly showed that every word was uttered by her with a deep consciousness that she was speaking under the special inspiration of the Spirit, and that she was entrusted with the delivery of a message directly received from heaven.

The former lady is only about forty years of age, and possesses a naturally fine and fascinating countenance apart from the serenity impressed upon it by the name of religion; the other must be upwards of sixty years of age, while her features are large, masculine, and so marked in their expression, as necessarily to leave a distinct remembrance of them on the minds of all who have ever seen her even for a moment. The former is rather under the ordinary height, and dresses with taste, though

also with the simplicity characteristic of the body; the latter is tall, and seems not to expend a thought on her toilette beyond avoiding positive slovenliness. Then there was something remarkable in the eye of the latter. The moment she rose she fixed her eye on the vacant space at the farther end of the meeting-house, and from that spot she never for a moment withdrew it. I have seen most of the leading tragic actresses of the day, and I have often witnessed their efforts to realize to the audience the idea of "fixing the eye on vacancy," but I have never, on such occasions, seen anything that at all approached the realization given in the instance in question. You would have fancied that she was not conscious of a single person being in the place; while her countenance had all the appearance of one who was wrapt in a profound reverie, just as if she had been holding intercourse with the spiritual intelligences that tenant another and purer sphere.

The speaker having resumed her seat, a state of solemn silence again reigned in the place. It was not, however, of long duration. It was speedily

broken by a male member of the Society, who rose and delivered a short address; of which nothing more can be said, than that it was plain and practical. In vigour of mind and literary taste, it was much inferior to the address of the lady who preceded. Scarcely had the male member of the body resumed his seat, than the lady who commenced the audible part of the worship again rose, and in the same dulcet tones and tender accents as before, addressed the audience for about seven or eight minutes. The first words she uttered were the well-known prayer of the Psalmist, "Show me a token for good;" and then she proceeded to remark on the innumerable proofs which had been afforded to those present, of the unmerited goodness of God during their past lives, but dwelling more especially on the proofs of Divine goodness which had been furnished to them, during the year which was then drawing to a close. The same heavenly serenity of countenance, the same mildness of manner, the same surpassing sweetness of accent, melody of voice, and beautiful simplicity of language, which characterised

her opening prayer, were displayed in the delivery of her address.

There were certain common attributes in the addresses of each of the speakers. They all fixed their eyes on a particular part of the meeting-house, and did not move their faces, as is commonly the case with ministers in other denominations, from one place to another. None of them used any gesticulation, but stood stock still; and yet in the manner of each, subdued though that manner was, there were a fervour and impressiveness which riveted the attention of all present, and could not have failed to rivet the attention of the most listless audience that ever assembled within the walls of the place.

With regard to the matter again, I have seldom, indeed, seen so much evangelical truth, whether of a doctrinal or preceptive character, condensed into addresses of equally limited length. And so entirely did the speakers abstain from any of their own denominational peculiarities, that had a person been conducted blindfolded into the meeting-house, he would not, from anything spoken on the occasion, have

suspected that he was in a Quaker place of worship.

After a short interval from the sitting down of the previous speaker, the lady who had given the first address, kneeled down and concluded the worship of the evening with prayer. Her approach to the mercy-seat occupied about twenty minutes; and a more thoroughly devotional spirit than she displayed, so far as man could judge, I have never witnessed. The spirituality, the variety, the fervour and fluency of that prayer, exceeded anything of which the minds of those who were not present could conceive. No regenerated and sanctified person could have listened to it, without feeling himself wafted in spirit to those celestial regions in which the unceasing occupation of the inhabitants is to offer up anthems of adoration and praise to Him that sitteth on the throne for ever and ever. It must, in other words, have seemed to every renewed spirit present, as if he had already been breathing the atmosphere, and listening to the exercises of the upper sanctuary.

On the conclusion of the prayer, the audience

remained about a minute in silent devotion, when the meeting broke up. The time which the exercises of the evening occupied was two hours and a half. I may here remark for the information of those who have not been present at one of their meetings, that the Quakers not only do not sing in their public worship, but that they do not take a Bible or book of any kind with them to their meeting-houses. The male members sit with their hats on, except during the time of speaking.

I have hinted in a previous part of this sketch, that the Quakers often meet together for public worship, without a single word being audibly uttered by any of their number. The solemn silence which occurred two or three times in the instance to which I have adverted, reigns on such occasions from their entering until they quit the place of worship. It is right, however, to remark, that though to other denominations of Christians these silent meetings would appear to be no worship at all, they are regarded by the Society of Friends as being as devout and as acceptable to the Object of all religious worship,

as those meetings in which there is the greatest amount of audible worship.

The Quaker meeting-houses, of which there are five in London, and six in its neighbourhood, are characterised by the same simplicity of appearance as the dress and manners of the body. They meet for religious worship every Sunday morning and evening, the same as other denominations of Christians. They have also a week-day meeting for Divine worship on Thursdays.

The number of Quakers in London, and, indeed, throughout the world, remain, as nearly as may be, stationary. Their own impression is, that the increase in their numbers by births, is fully counterbalanced by the secessions from their body, which are constantly taking place.



CHAPTER XV.

THE JEWS.

Their numbers—Their occupations—Their wealth—Domestic habits of the Jews—Their religious observances in private—Their public worship in the synagogue—Remarks respecting their religion—General observations.

THOUGH thousands of Jews have been living in the metropolis, and in all the large towns of England, for the last two centuries, the greatest ignorance exists as to their habits, customs, and manners; to everything, indeed, relating to that singular people. We know no more about their domestic economy than if there were not a Jew to be met with within the confines of civilization. That this should be the fact in the case of a nation so inquisitive; so eager for the acquisition of knowledge of every description, as the English, may well excite our surprise; but

immeasurably more astonished must the reader feel when I mention, that among the metropolitan Jews themselves equal ignorance prevails; not, of course, as to their customs, habits, and so forth; but in reference to their statistics as a portion of the population of London. Often as I have had to encounter difficulty in the prosecution of my inquiries into matters which had not before been brought fairly and fully before the public eye, I must say that never were those difficulties so numerous or formidable as in the case of my inquiries into the statistics and domestic economy of the Jews. And this, not in consequence of any unwillingness on the part of that people to furnish me with the desired information, but because their ignorance on the points to which I principally directed my attention, was nearly as great as that of those professing the Christian faith, or professing no faith at all. And yet the Jews whom I have in vain consulted on the topics to which I refer, are men of very great and general intelligence in the matters which ordinarily engage the attention of mankind; a fact which will be the more

readily believed, when I mention that among those who have been most anxious though unable to furnish me with the information sought for, are some of their own rabbies and priests. It will appear singular when I state the fact, that not one of their number, though I put the question to nearly twenty different individuals, could enable me to form even a confident conjecture as to the aggregate number of persons of their persuasion in London. Some of them supposed there might be about 10,000; the guesses of others went as high as from 20,000 to 25,000. And it was only when I had ascertained as nearly as might be, the numbers who attend each of the synagogues on the day of atonement—which is the greatest day the Jews have in the course of the year—that I was led to the conclusion that the number of Jews resident in London is from 12,000 to 15,000. Having in a former work—"Travels in Town"—occasion to allude to the London Jews, I stated their supposed number to be 10,000; the result of farther inquiries leads me to estimate their numbers as above.

There is a very general impression that the Jews make it a point not to engage in any manual occupation. This is an error. One of their number has gone over with me a string of names in almost every trade contained in the London directory, and pointed out various Jewish individuals and firms, that are engaged in almost every trade or occupation followed in London. It is true, nevertheless, that as a people, the Jews have a decided dislike to manual labour of every kind; and that the numbers who engage in any bodily or hard work, bear no proportion to those who earn a subsistence, or acquire fortunes, by avocations which require no physical exertions whatever. As for what is called day-labour, I never knew an instance of a Jew gaining a livelihood by it; neither am I acquainted with any instance of their engaging in rural pursuits. Merchandise is, from the highest to the lowest, the favourite occupation with them. A great many of them are attornies; and a very considerable proportion of their number live by lending money at an extravagant rate of interest. Of course the

rate of interest they demand, varies with the supposed risk; but, from all the information I have been able to procure on the point, I should think the average interest they receive for the bills they discount, is not under twenty-five per cent. From the young prodigal sons of noblemen, and others of good expectations, they often obtain as much as fifty per cent.; only that in such cases they usually calculate on having to lie out of their principal for several years. To such an extent does the lending of money, in the shape of discounting bills, prevail among the Jews, that a "Jew money-lender" has almost become a proverbial expression.

I had occasion to allude in a previous work to the opinion expressed by Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer, in his two volumes on "England and the English—" namely, that three-fourths of the landed property of the country is mortgaged to the Jews. I think there must be an exaggeration here; but there can be no question that a large portion of the landed property of England is very deeply mortgaged to them. Taken as a class or community, they are exceedingly rich.

A very considerable proportion of the wealth of the metropolis is in their hands. And here I may remark, that their wealth is entirely of a personal or floating kind. Though they hold deeds on houses and lands, they do not hold the houses or lands themselves. They take care, when they advance money on heritable or landed property, to advance it under circumstances which will enable them, in case it might be deemed desirable, to recal their advances on the shortest notice. The great reasons why the Jews do not become the real proprietors of houses or lands are, that they consider themselves while in this country to be but strangers and pilgrims in a foreign land; that they are in constant expectation of being suddenly summoned by a special message from the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to return to the land of their forefathers; and that were they the proprietors of land or houses, the circumstance might, from the difficulty of getting either species of property advantageously disposed of with the requisite expedition, interfere with their prompt obedience to the

Divine command, to "arise and return to Jerusalem."

The love of money is a very general and very strong propensity in the human breast. It is a passion which is peculiar to no country nor class of men. I believe, however, that all who are acquainted with the Israelitish community, will bear me out in the statement, that of all classes of persons they are the most thoroughly, steadily, and perseveringly bent on the acquisition of wealth. A Jew will make money where no one else could. I will undertake to say, for example, that none but Jews could obtain a livelihood—in some instances fortunes are made—by dealing in old clothes, in Rag Fair, as fully described in my third chapter. Neither could any but Hebrews procure a living, far less amass wealth, by their traffic in old shoes; as in the case of the Jews of Monmouth Street. What contributes materially to the wealth of the Jews, is the circumstance of their being remarkably economical in their habits. Speaking of them as a body, they studiously avoid the very appearance of extravagance. Apart from the claims which

their religion has upon them, the trading portion of them are not in the habit of expending a single shilling not absolutely required by the necessities of nature. They are exceedingly fond of places of public amusement; but, with very few exceptions—and these almost exclusively among the younger branches—they take care not to indulge their propensities that way, at any expense. They do not drink. It is a curious fact, and highly creditable to them, that the Jews, as a body, are more temperate than any other class of the community; even the most religious classes in it, with, perhaps, the single exception of the Quakers. They are not members of Temperance Societies, because they need no such adventitious helps to sobriety. To see a Jew in a public house, unless led into it by business, is a remarkably rare circumstance: to see a Jew drunk in the streets is what I am not sensible of ever having seen, notwithstanding the length of my residence in London, and the extent to which my avocations lead me to mingle in its busier scenes. Then there is the general cheapness of their rentals, and the

little expense at which their houses are, for the most part, furnished. The great body of them live in dark, unpleasant, unhealthy parts of the town, where nobody else, possessing the means of procuring better accommodation, would ever think of choosing a place of residence. Rents, of course, are proportionably low; and as they devote nearly the whole of that portion of their time not required by their religion, to business pursuits, they have little inducement to furnish expensively. Besides, the very localities in which the greatest number of them reside, are quite unsuited to fine furniture. With the knowledge of these facts, the reader will not be surprised, when I inform him, that hundreds of Jews living in the most uninviting parts of London, and in the most miserable houses, and whose clothing is a mass of rags, are persons of very great opulence. Many a Jew whom we would be apt, judging from his appearance, to deem a fit subject for a charitable gratuity, can boast of possessing his thousands of pounds.

Those acquainted with the Mosaic and prophetic writings, must have been struck with the

frequency with which the Old Testament penmen speak of the passionate fondness of the Jews for ornament. In this respect they are precisely the same now as they were in the days of Moses. Even those of them who dress most indifferently, will almost always be found to have some sort of gold ornament about their persons. Rings, chains, and other articles of jewellery, are almost always to be seen about the persons of Jews, whether male or female.

The Jews are a remarkably peaceable people. They are very rarely to be found engaged in any of the personal outrages that are so common in the metropolis. And even in the very few instances in which the name of a Jew is to be found mixed up in any scuffle or affray that takes place, it will almost always be found that he is not the aggressor. A Jew is a singularly quiet, inoffensive member of society. You can scarcely, even by repeated insults, goad him into the commission of a personal assault. Perhaps the circumstance is to be accounted for from the fact, that the Jews have been, for a long succession of centuries, the subjects of op-

pression and indignities in every country in which they have settled. The poor unhappy Jew is not only treated with disrespect in all countries calling themselves Christian, but he is too often the victim of persecution. The result of a long continuance of insult and persecution, has been to blunt his sensibilities, to break his spirit, and to make him submit in uncomplaining silence to whatever outrages may be offered to him. And yet the poorest and most despised Jew that passes our doors in the pursuit of his "old-clothes" vocation, can boast, as was beautifully remarked a few weeks ago by the Rev. Mr. Dixon, the President of the Wesleyan Conference, in a sermon in Great Queen Street Chapel—of a far more ancient and illustrious lineage than the noblest and most ancient family in the land; for he can clearly and conclusively trace his genealogy as far back as the patriarch Abraham himself.

The Jews, as a nation or community, take very little interest in politics. We scarcely ever hear a complaint from any of their number on the subject of their civil disabilities, great as

these are. Their petitions to the sovereign or the senate for a participation in the civil immunities enjoyed by all other classes of their fellow-subjects, are matters of very rare occurrence. One or two of their number—Mr. Ex-Sheriff Salomons and Mr. Goldsmidt, for instance—have, it is true, written pamphlets in favour of their emancipation; but as a body they have never evinced any anxiety to be put in possession of the same political and civil privileges as are enjoyed by other classes of the community. Some persons express great surprise at their supineness on this point. Those who know anything of their opinions and feelings can at once satisfactorily account for it. The reason is to be found in the fact, that they consider themselves a distinct nation, no matter how widely they may be scattered over the world; and that they expect to be all *speedily* restored to the land of their fathers; for the Jews have, ever since their original dispersion, in our first century, clung to the hope of a *speedy* restoration to Judea. They, therefore, have no wish to amalgamate with the citizens of

any other country ; and they still continue in many respects as distinct a people, though living in the heart of the metropolis, as their forefathers did in the days of Moses and the prophets, when dwelling in the midst of the Gentile nations. This is a most remarkable feature in the Hebrew character, and one which can only be explained on the hypothesis, that the predictions of the Scriptures respecting the Divine dealings with the Jewish people, are the dictates of unerring truth.

To the Jews of the metropolis, in their capacity of members of the social body, I shall have occasion to make repeated references in the course of the chapter. In the meantime the reader will, I am sure, be pleased to be conducted to their homes, and to have some insight afforded him into their private and domestic usages.

The Jews, immediately after rising, prepare for breakfast. They are most scrupulous in their observance of grace at their meals. Having washed their hands—which is a practice invariably observed at meals by all the strict Jews—one

of the number present says this short grace before meat:—"Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God! King of the universe, who bringeth forth bread from the earth." After the meal, they must again wash their hands, and say the following grace:—"We will bless Him, of whose gifts we have eaten." If there be three persons at the table, the other two make this response:—"Blessed be He of whose gifts we have eaten, and through whose abundant goodness we live;" and the words are repeated by the party who said grace. In those cases in which ten or more persons sit down to table, one of the number says after the meal, "We will bless our God, of whose gifts we have eaten;" and the others return the answer given above. To their answer, the person saying grace responds as follows:—"Blessed be God, of whose gifts we have eaten, and through whose abundant goodness we live. Blessed be He, blessed be his name, and blessed his memorial for ever and ever." If a person sits down to a meal by himself, he says a very long grace—one that would fill a closely-printed octavo page. The grace begins thus:—

“Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who sustaineth us, but not for the merit of our works; and cherisheth us, but not for our righteousness; who superabundantly bestoweth his goodness on us; who feedeth us and the whole world with his goodness, and with grace renders abundance and mercy, giveth bread to every creature, for his mercy endureth for ever; and his abundant goodness hath never been deficient towards us: and may we never be in want of sustenance for ever and ever; for he feedeth and sustaineth all, and his table is provided for all. He hath also prepared food and sustenance for all his creatures, which he hath created in his mercy and abundant kindness; as it is written, ‘Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.’ Blessed art thou, O Lord, who giveth food unto all.” In a form of grace used on the occasion of a particular feast, and when only one person sits down to the meal, there occurs this passage:—“Thou art our Father, our Pastor, and Feeder; our maintenance, happiness, and enlargement. Enlarge us speedily

from all our troubles, and suffer us not, O Lord our God, to stand in need of the gifts of mankind, nor their loan ; for their gift is small, and their reproach great : but let us depend on thy full and extensive hand only, which is rich and always open ; so that we may not be put to shame in this world, nor confounded in the future."

When one Jew has received hospitable treatment from another, he is enjoined by the prayer-book to express his sense of his host's bounty by pronouncing the following benediction: " May He who is most merciful bless this table on which we have eaten, and furnish it with all the dainties of the universe ; so that it may equal the table of our ancestor Abraham ; that all who are hungry may eat therefrom, and those who are dry drink therefrom. May He who is most merciful bless the master of this house and feast, him and all belonging to him ; so that his children may not die, nor his estate be consumed ; that he may not be put to shame in this world, nor confounded in the future : and may his substance prosper and be near the city, and no obstruction be given to his undertakings ;

neither may he be allured to sin or vicious thoughts from henceforth and for evermore."

The ordinary meals of the Jews resemble those of other classes of the community, only that they must on no account taste or touch pork; nor must they partake of animal flesh of any kind not killed by their own butchers. They look on our meat as unclean, because the cattle are killed by blows on the head, instead of by the dividing of the windpipe by a knife. They deem it essential to the cleanness of an animal, that the blood should all be cleared away. But this of itself does not constitute cleanness. If the throat of the animal be not properly severed; or, in other words, the knife should, by the sudden motion of the animal slip on one side of the windpipe, the flesh of the animal must not be used. The flesh is also held to be defiled and unfit for use, if there should be the least flaw in the knife by which the process of slaying the animal is performed. The meat is also held to be polluted if, on opening the animal, the slayer finds that the lights adhere in the slightest degree to the ribs. The Jews are

consequently obliged to have slayers of their own. They have also a class of persons called "searchers," whose office it is to stand by and witness the killing of every animal, and then to examine its interior thoroughly, to see that there be no impurity within. If there be the slightest deviation, though it be purely accidental, from the prescribed method of slaying the animal; or any perceptible flaw in the knife by which the operation is performed; or should the searcher decide that the lights adhere in any degree however slender to the ribs, then the entire animal is declared unfit for use. And in order that those Jews who have to purchase their meat at market, may be able to ascertain without trouble or difficulty what animal flesh is clean, the searcher affixes an official leaden stamp with the Hebrew word "Kasher," meaning "lawful," on it, to every animal that he approves; and the meat with that stamp is carried to the market, and sold in the same way as the butchers' meat of other classes. In Leadenhall market Jewish meat with this stamp upon it, is to be seen every day. A Jew will, on no account, purchase any

meat that has not this stamp affixed to it. Indeed, he would rather die of starvation than partake of any of our butchers' meat. The consequence of the great care taken by the Jews to see that their meat be undefiled, and the circumstance of their butchers having sometimes the sale of entire animals prohibited, is that the Jews pay on an average more than three half-pence for every pound of their meat, than we do for ours. The salaries of the searchers vary, according to circumstances, from 200*L*. to 300*L*. a-year.

Even in the case of a fowl, a Jew must not partake of its flesh, unless killed in a particular way, and by a person of their own persuasion appointed for the purpose. And here I may remark, that the inconvenience of procuring poultry and butchers' meat, without the great expenses incident to carriage, is one of the principal reasons why Jews are scarcely ever to be found in the rural districts of England.

In the domestic concerns of the Jews, it is indispensable to have four sets of culinary utensils. To obtain these, is the very first act of a Jew

after becoming a householder. Two sets are used in common all the year round, with the exception of the period of the passover. The other two are not used on any occasion throughout the year, but are reserved solely for the time of the passover; and in order that the two sets of articles for culinary purposes may be kept quite distinct, every householder has his two cupboards, or other conveniences, in which they may be placed. The one set of articles is confined to the preparation and serving up of food in which butter is used, and the other for victuals of an animal kind. Should any of the articles used for animal food happen, by accident, to come in contact with those used for victuals in which butter is used, the circumstance is deemed a calamity of the greatest magnitude, and throws the whole family into a state of the most dreadful dismay. The simple, and with us very common incident, for example, of a knife or spoon, or the cover of a saucepan, which had been used for butter victuals, falling into a pot or other article used for the preparation of animal food, would be deemed a disaster of so ter-

rible a kind, that the Jewess of the house, whose duty it is to look after all culinary matters, would feel that she should have afterwards to give an account to God for it. Or should a knife, appropriated to the cutting of butter, be, by some mischance, stuck into a round of beef or leg of lamb, the calamity would be deemed so great as to throw the whole household into the most fearful consternation. The beef or the lamb would be, from that moment, deemed defiled, and, with trembling hand, would be cast out of the house. The most craving appetite would not touch it; no, nor would the offer of all the wealth in the world prove a prevailing inducement to partake of it. The Jew that can curse and swear, and rob and steal, and grossly violate every precept in the moral law, would submit to martyrdom at once, rather than suffer the polluted food to enter his mouth. The greatest care is consequently taken to prevent any such appalling accidents; and the natural consequence of such care is, that these accidents very rarely occur. In addition to the four sets of culinary utensils to which I have referred, there

is, in every Jewish house, a distinct knife for cutting bread, and another for cutting butter.

With regard to the eating and drinking of the Jews, very mistaken notions prevail. It is generally supposed that a Jew will not, on any account, sit down at table with a Christian. Nothing could be more erroneous. I have been at public dinners with several of the most distinguished of their number, when the Christians were in the proportion of fifty to one to them, and where I have seen them evidently enjoying themselves as much as any persons at the table. The only inconvenience which a Jew, in such a case, suffers, is that he cannot eat any of the butchers' meat or poultry which is served up; he must content himself with fish, puddings, pies, cheese, bread, and other articles not forbidden by his religion. A Christian who knows the opinions—prejudices he would call them—of the Jews, as to things which are or are not lawful to be eaten, would never think of asking one of their number to a private dinner; but you may ask them, without any inconvenience either to yourself or them, to breakfast or tea. Some

of their rabbies have been in my own house at tea, and have partaken of that meal—if meal it may be called—in exactly the same way as any other person would have done.

But though no Christian, acquainted with the usages of Judaism, would think of asking a Jew to dinner; and though no Jew, if so asked, would accept the invitation, unless aware beforehand that no “unlawful” food would be set before him—a Jew has no scruple in asking a Christian to dine with him, because there is nothing at an ordinary Jewish dinner of which the Christian may not partake.

The great Jewish fasts, feasts, and observances, are not confined to the synagogues; some of their great religious usages are observed in their own houses. For example, on a particular evening, during the days of the passover, it is the practice of every householder to provide a feast for all in his house; and to raise, for the time, the poorest person in it to an equality with the highest. On such occasions Sir Moses Montefiore would cause the poorest, most ragged, and most despised Jew in London, to sit down

beside himself in his splendid dining-room, and treat him with as much respect as if he were the most distinguished and most honoured person in the land. On such occasions, also, the most costly articles a Jew has in his house, are laid on the table; and everything that ingenuity can devise, is done to decorate it. On an adjoining side-board, if there be not room on the table, all the plate, jewellery, and other valuable articles belonging to the family are deposited; so that, in rich families, the scene is altogether one of a very peculiar and imposing kind. The object is to remind each other, that when their ancestors quitted Egypt, they did not go empty-handed. The reason of the richer Jews raising their servants to an equality with themselves on this particular night, is that they may thereby commemorate the circumstance of their having been all servants and bondsmen in the land of Egypt.

Among the things on the table on these occasions, in addition to the passover cakes on a large stand covered over with a white napkin, there are three that are indispensable. The

first is a basin or other dish, filled with salt water ; a second contains a kind of sweetmeat made of apples, nuts, sugar, &c., and having the consistency of paste ; and the third basin or dish, is occupied by a small lamb's bone, which has been roasted according to a prescribed form. All these dishes are strewed over with rue and other bitter herbs. Each person at the table is provided with a glass of wine, which is taken up while the master of the house is saying a certain form of prayer, and every one, holding the glass of wine in his or her hand, repeats the prayer after the master. Particular psalms are then chaunted in a loud voice by the master, and all the others do the same ; just as the congregation do after the clerk in particular parts of the service of the Church of England. These psalms are thanksgivings for all the deliverances which Jehovah has wrought for the children of Israel, and for all the mercies he has bestowed upon them. In the course of the evening mention is repeatedly made of the ten plagues with which God smote the Egyptians, and every time these plagues are

referred to, each person dips his finger in the salt water in commemoration of their forefathers passing through the Red Sea in safety, while Pharaoh and all his hosts were drowned. A passover cake, which is simply made of flour and water without salt or yeast, is then taken by each person in rotation; he breaking it into small pieces, and giving a portion to the others around him. A portion of the bitter herbs is also given in rotation to each one at the table, and is eaten contemporaneously with the passover cake. The bitter herbs are intended to perpetuate the memory of the embittered existence which their ancestors were doomed to spend in Egypt, when under the domination of the people of that country. Each one next partakes of a portion of the sweetmeats, which are meant to indicate the difference between the present case of the Jews and that of their forefathers when in Egypt. In the course of the ceremony, each person touches the roasted lamb's bone, which is intended to bring anew to their remembrance, the offering up of the paschal lamb. Suitable prayers are said on

each occasion, and in the course of the feast, each person drinks five glasses of wine.

All the more opulent Jews keep one Christian or Gentile servant, in addition to their Jewish household. The reason of this is, that by their laws they are prohibited from lighting or stirring a fire, or lighting or extinguishing a candle or lamp, on their Sabbath-day. The London Jews think, however, that there is no sin in allowing it to be done by persons not of their persuasion; inasmuch as the law, having been originally given to them alone, is not binding on other persons. Those of them not able to keep an English servant—for that is the name by which they call persons who are not of their community—employ some old woman or other female for the Sabbath alone. Many women in the eastern parts of the metropolis make a living by attending to Jewish lights and fires on their Sabbaths; each family allowing fourpence for such attention, and some of these women having as many as fifteen or twenty houses to look after. If, through the neglect or otherwise of these attendants, a Jewish fire should happen

to go out on the Sabbath-day, the family submit to the privation until sun-set, even should the weather be the most severe ever known in the country. No consideration on earth will induce them to touch or light a fire on their Sabbath. In Russia and some other northern latitudes, the consciences of the Jews are less accommodating than those of their brethren in London, as to the sinlessness of allowing Christians to light their candles, lamps, or fires; and therefore in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and other inclement regions, a fire or light is never seen in the house of a Jew on the Sabbath-day; not even during the rigour of the worst winters. After mentioning this I need hardly add, that the Jews do no kind of work on the Sabbath-day. They are not even allowed to prepare any kind of food.

The Jews—I mean of course the stricter sort—are rigid observers of their Sabbaths in other respects. They not only never engage in any business matters on that day, but they do not even converse with one another on secular matters. But, though they will not transact any

matters of business themselves, many of their number who are engaged in mercantile pursuits, have no scruples as to the lawfulness of allowing others to do it for them. Hence many of their shops in the metropolis are to be seen open on their Sabbath-day. On that day they are not to go more than one mile out of town, that being a Mosaic Sabbath-day's journey ; but they may walk fifty miles in town or the suburbs, if they are so disposed.

The Jews have an immense number of ejaculatory prayers, which they say on observing particular occurrences and meeting with particular incidents in the ordinary walks of private life. For example, on perceiving a rainbow they say, "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe ! the rememberer of his covenant ; faithful in the performance of his covenant, and his words are permanent." At the sight of very high hills, mountains, and wildernesses, they say, "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe ! the Creator of the first creation." And when they see any person who has recovered from a dangerous sickness, they in-

wardly ejaculate, "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe! who hast restored thee unto us, and not given thee to the earth."

Most of the Jews marry in early life. In fact it is deemed a sin for any man who has passed the age of twenty to remain unmarried, provided he has the means of supporting a wife. In some cases Jewish parents marry their children at the age of seven or eight years. When the girl has attained the age of twelve years and a day, then a Jewish woman is declared to be of age. If, however, she does not like the party to whom her parents have united her, she can, when of age, demand a divorce. Such early marriages are, however, of very unfrequent occurrence among the Jews of London.

On the subject of courtship the Jews have peculiar opinions. The parties are usually betrothed to each other from six to twelve months before the marriage takes place. During this period the lover visits the party to whom he is affianced; but, unlike the visits of lovers generally, they are characterised by a sort of busi-

ness-like formality. A Jewish betrothment is generally celebrated in the presence of witnesses, consisting of the nearest relations of the parties and the heads of the synagogue, who are specially invited for the purpose. A scribe is also present for the purpose of drawing up an agreement. A day is fixed for the wedding, and the bride and bridegroom severally come under a written obligation, that if either forsakes the other, unless by mutual consent, the party breaking off the match shall forfeit a given sum, the amount of which varies with the pecuniary circumstances of the parties. This penalty is sometimes as low as 50*l.*, and is often as high as 500*l.* And here I should observe, that this is no mere idle form. It is a painful reality, as many have found it in their experience. I myself know a young Jewish man who lately came under the obligation, and was obliged either to pay the penalty or proceed with the marriage, though the altered aspect his circumstances had assumed during the interval between his betrothment and the marriage, rendered it exceedingly desirable that he

should postpone the latter. His bride, however, insisted on the fulfilment of the bond, and there was no alternative for him but to submit to his hard destiny. At all betrothments among the Jews, as at marriages among us, there is a great deal of feasting and rejoicing; and immediately after the betrothment has taken place, both parties make a point of informing their respective friends of the circumstance.

A Jewish marriage is an imposing spectacle. Formerly most of their marriages took place in the synagogue, but latterly they have been more frequently solemnised in their houses. At the hour appointed, the bride and the bridegroom are severally conducted, the bridegroom by male friends, and the bride by friends of her own sex, to the place appointed for the celebration of the ceremony. The company assembled to witness the ceremony, is usually very large. Sometimes there are as many friends as from two to three hundred. There must be ten men, otherwise the marriage would not be valid. When the company have all assembled, and the priest or reader who officiates on the occasion, is

ready, the bride and bridegroom are led from another room into the place where the ceremony is to be performed, under a velvet canopy, which is supported by four poles; the bride being supported on the arms of two women, and the bridegroom on the arms of two men. These are always the parents of the parties about to be married, provided the parents be alive and able to be present. If not, then the task is confided to the nearest relations. The bride, on being conducted to the place where the marriage is to be solemnised, is invariably veiled, in token of the assumed modesty of her character. When they reach the spot, the bride is placed opposite the bridegroom, and the priest—not the rabbi, as some persons erroneously suppose—having taken a glass of wine in his hand, says a brief prayer, of which the following are the leading passages:—"Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe! who hath prohibited unto us the betrothed, but hath allowed unto us those that are named by the means of the canopy and wedding-ring. Blessed art thou, O Lord! Sanctifier of his people Israel by the

means of the canopy and the wedlock. Blessed art thou, O Lord, our Lord ; King of the universe ! who hast created joy and gladness ; bridegroom and bride ; delight and song ; pleasure and sympathy ; love and brotherhood ; peace and friendship. Speedily, O Lord our God ! let there be heard in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of joy and the voice of gladness ; the voice of merriment of the bridegrooms from out of their canopies, and youths for their musical feasts. Blessed art thou, O Lord ! the rejoicer of the bridegroom with the bride." After this prayer is said by the priest, the bridegroom and the bride severally drink of the wine laid before them ; and the bridegroom goes round the bride three times, and the bride round the bridegroom twice. The bridegroom then takes the ring and puts it on the bride's finger, and addresses her thus :— " Behold thou art betrothed unto me with this ring, according to the rites of Moses and Israel." The marriage contract, which is an indispensable thing in all Jewish marriages, is next read, in which the bridegroom binds himself to take

the bride as his lawful wife, according to the law of Moses and Israel, and that he will maintain, honour, and cherish her. It is farther distinctly specified that he shall keep her in decent clothing. The sum he is to settle on her in the event of his dying first, is also specified. The priest then drinks another glass of wine, and after a short prayer, the bride and bridegroom severally partake of the wine. The empty glass is then laid upon the ground, and the bridegroom stamping upon it, breaks it in pieces. The lesson meant to be taught the newly-married parties by the breaking of the glass beneath the bridegroom's feet, is that they must also, sooner or later, fall beneath the power of death, and that they ought, consequently, so to keep the world under their feet as that, when they come to die, they may have no ground for fear.

This part of the ceremony being over, all present shout with one voice in Hebrew, "May it turn out happily," and the whole affair is then ended. The scene is altogether very imposing, and the effect is very considerably heightened by the personal attractions and handsome dresses

of the Jewesses, and the touching Hebrew melody which is played during the greater part of the ceremony by a band specially engaged for the purpose. When the ceremony is concluded, the evening is spent in rejoicing and festivity.

Before concluding my account of the ceremonies observed at a Jewish marriage, it is right to remark, that even the nuptials of the poorer persons of the Hebrew community are solemnised on a scale of great splendour. Indeed, it would be difficult for a mere spectator to say whether the parties were poor or rich from the appearance of the assemblage before him ; for rich persons often attend the weddings of their poorer brethren, and invariably make a point of presenting the bride and bridegroom with some handsome gifts, either in the shape of money or plate, according to the circumstances of the parties. The presents so received always cover the expenses ; in many instances they considerably exceed them. But besides this, there is a benevolent Jewish Society, established for the express purpose of giv-

ing small marriage portions to poor Jewess girls. The amount given varies from 65*l.* to 95*l.*

As intimately connected with the marriages of the Jews, I ought here to remark that nothing can exceed the anxiety of married Jewesses to become the mothers of children. A barren woman is looked upon by them with feelings bordering on contempt; and every motherless married Jewess is so well aware of this, that her life may, in a modified sense, be said to be a burden to her. To such an extent, indeed, is the feeling carried among the body, that a husband whose wife has been seven years married to him, without having any children, may put her away by divorce. The circumstance, however, of a Jewess being divorced by her husband on this account, is one of exceedingly rare occurrence.

Having thus given an account of Jewish marriages, let me now turn for a few moments to Jewish deaths. Here also the ceremonies observed by this peculiar people are altogether different from those which prevail among other classes of the community.

When a Jew dies, intimation is made of the fact in the synagogue, by the reader stopping in the midst of a particular prayer and mentioning the name of the deceased, the place where he lies, and the hour of interment. The burial of a Jew must not take place sooner than twenty-four hours after his death; but almost all Jews are interred within forty-eight hours of their death. It is deemed a species of disgrace to allow the body to be longer than forty-eight hours above the ground.

The ceremony of washing the bodies of the dead is still observed by the Jews. Four men wash the bodies of dead males, and four women the bodies of dead females. The persons who are to perform the ceremony are chosen by lot from a certain number of persons, members of a society for the purpose, belonging to each congregation. The same persons also dig the grave. The body of the deceased, soon after the spirit has departed, is taken and placed on the ground, covered with black cloth, and has one lighted candle placed at the head, and another at the feet. There it remains until the hour

appointed for the funeral, when it is put into the coffin, which always consists of four plain deals, without being coloured. A black cloth is then thrown over the coffin, which is deposited in the hearse, and conveyed to the burying-ground. A number of persons, none of whom, however, are females, usually attend the funeral. On reaching the place of interment (which, I ought to remark, is always in ground exclusively appropriated for the burial of Jews), the coffin is taken out of the hearse, and opened to see that nothing has been displaced by the jolting of the hearse. Everything being right, the coffin is again closed, and all present say a prayer commencing thus:—"He is our rock. His work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, just and right is He. He is the rock. He is perfect in all his work. Who is it that can say unto Him, what workest thou? He governeth both above and beneath. He killeth and maketh alive. He maketh to go down into the grave, and bringeth up again. He is the rock. He is perfect in all doings." The coffin is then carried a few paces nearer to the grave, when it

is again laid down, and all present say the following words:—"Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe ! who hath formed you in judgment, and fed and cherished you in judgment, and killed you in judgment ; and knows the number of you all in judgment ; and in future time will cause ye to live again in judgment. Blessed art thou, O Lord ! the restorer of life to the dead." The body is then conveyed to the grave, and as the persons present retire from the burying-ground, they pluck some grass and say—"They shall spring forth from the city as the grass of the earth." They then wash their hands, and say—"He will swallow up death for ever, and the Lord God will wipe away the tears from off all faces ; and the rebuke of his people will be removed from off all the earth ; for the Lord hath spoken it." After this they say the last verse of the ninetieth psalm, and the whole of the ninety-first. According to the Jewish ritual, I should here remark, that all the Jewish places of interment are divided into two departments : the one is appropriated to the reception of the bodies of

those who have led irreproachable lives ; the other for the interment of those who have pursued a dissolute course.

The Jewish mode of mourning for the dead is as singular as are the ceremonies connected with the funeral. For all near relations, they rend their garments. This is done in the cases of wife, son, daughter, brother or sister, by taking a knife, and, holding the blade downwards, making a small incision on the right side of their upper garment, and then rending it a hand's breadth. In the case of father or mother, the rent must be on the left side, and must be made in all the garments, coat, waistcoat, &c., which the mourner is in the habit of wearing. The days of mourning are seven, during which time the relatives of the deceased do not quit their houses, nor engage in any kind of business, but sit on the ground barefooted, and, in that posture and place, receive the visits of those who come to condole with them. The light which was placed at the head of the corpse before being put into the coffin, is kept burning thirty-one days, that being the period during

which Aaron was mourned for. The light is called the light of the departed spirit ; and according as it burns bright or dim, is the happiness or misery of the disembodied soul supposed to be.

The Jews believe in the doctrine of purgatory. It was from them, indeed, that the Church of Rome derived the doctrine, though she has made several additions to it and presented it in a somewhat altered shape. In accordance with their belief in purgatory, the eldest son of a Jew goes regularly to synagogue every morning and evening for eleven months after his father's death, to pray for his soul. If, however, a son die, neither the father nor any one else offers up prayers for his soul. Why this should be, I cannot tell. When the soul is got out of purgatory, it is supposed to remain in a dormant state until the resurrection morn. Then the souls of all Jews shall re-enter the bodies they formerly tenanted, and there remain in Palestine for ever with the Messiah. The heaven of the Jews is, in other words, to be on earth, where they are to dwell in perfect bliss to all eternity.

Having thus given an account of the Jewish modes of life in private, and of the manner in which they worship Jehovah in their individual capacities, let me now advert to some of the more interesting circumstances connected with their public worship in the synagogue.

To see the Jewish form of worship to advantage, it is necessary to attend their synagogues on some of their great days. The names and seasons of these I shall afterward have occasion to refer to. On their Sabbath-days, the attendance is very thin. On ordinary week days again—for they have service twice every day all the year through—there are seldom more than from three or four, to ten or twelve persons present. On their great occasions, the synagogues are crowded to such an extent that there is difficulty in finding standing-room. I was present at the Feast of Tabernacles, on Wednesday, the 29th of last month; that is, about three weeks before this work will be in the hands of the public. In describing what I observed on that occasion, coupled with what I have seen on other previous occasions, the reader will be able

to form a very good idea of the general characteristics of Jewish worship. When a Jew enters the synagogue he bows towards the ark, which is always at the farthest or eastern end. And here I should state, that all synagogues are built in an eastern and western direction. The interior of the ark I cannot describe, because it was not open on any of those occasions on which I have been in a synagogue. It is, indeed, only open on very particular days in the year. Externally, it appeared to me like an immense mahogany press; only that the workmanship is of a superior kind. In it are contained numerous copies of the law—sometimes as many as forty or fifty—written on vellum. These, on particular occasions, are taken out, unrolled by the priest, and by him exhibited to the congregation. On two or three of the great Jewish days, every office-bearer in the synagogue marches round the synagogue in solemn procession, bearing above his head an unfolded copy of the law. To see ten or twelve persons thus proceeding in due order round the synagogue, is a very imposing spectacle. The altar

is usually near the middle of the synagogue. The size of the altars I have seen, may have been from twelve to twenty feet square; their dimensions varying with the size of the synagogue. The altar is ascended by a flight of three or four steps, and is surmounted or protected by a wooden railing. The desk of the reader is at that part of the altar fronting the ark; so that he always has his face to the ark. There he stands with the prayer-book before him, resting on the desk, and clothed on ordinary occasions with a garment not very dissimilar in form to the gowns worn by the clergy,—only that it is of a white colour. The priest has also bands, exactly the same in form and size as those which are worn by our clergy. In this respect, however, he differs from the latter—that his head is always covered by a three-cornered hat; something between the hat of a bishop and that worn by the Lord Chancellor and other peers of the realm, when giving the royal assent by commission to acts of Parliament. The whole of the congregation also wear their hats while in synagogue. They regard it

as expressive of reverence to the Deity. To perform any act of religious worship with the head uncovered, they look upon as highly irreverent. Hence when saying grace at a meal, or giving an oath in a court of justice, a Jew always puts on his hat. Neither will the Jews allow a Christian to sit or stand in their synagogues with his hat on his head. To me it appeared a very strange sight, to see a very large assemblage of persons, all covered, while engaged in worshipping the Supreme Being. The Jews on entering the synagogue, go direct to their respective seats; and each one unlocking a box below his seat, takes out a scarf,—provided the occasion be one of those in which the scarfs are worn. The scarfs are of a white complexion, and are thrown around the shoulders, the two ends hanging down in front. The prayer-book is also taken out of the box at the same time. Indeed, it seemed to me that to have a prayer-book in the hand of the party was deemed an essential pre-requisite to acceptable worship. The performance of the principal part of the services devolves on the priest; but the con-

gregation appear to follow him, with few exceptions, in a suppressed sort of mutter, all through. On some occasions they simultaneously speak in very audible accents, and at times they suddenly break out into loud disagreeable sounds—disagreeable I mean to a stranger's ear—somewhat resembling a kind of howl. As, however, the whole of the service, from beginning to end, is performed in Hebrew, I am unable to convey any idea of the meaning of these sounds. The priest reads the prayers for the most part in a sort of half-singing, half-chaunting tone. At times he sings the hymns in precisely the same way as some of our foreign singers execute their singing at the Italian Opera! and then, occasionally joined by the congregation, he reverts to the mode of singing common in Christian congregations; only that being in Hebrew, it has a very different effect. One of the priests at the Duke Street synagogue, I ought here to mention, possesses one of the most powerful and richly-toned voices I ever heard. It is not inferior to that of Braham himself, who is also a descendant of Abraham; and I feel convinced

that had he studied vocal music for the stage, or the concert-room, instead of for the synagogue, he would have at once attained to fame and fortune. Beyond singing, the reading of the law, and the reading of prayers, there is nothing observable, on ordinary occasions, in Jewish worship. The reader makes particular motions with his body, at particular parts of the service, and the congregation often rise up and sit down; but why they make these changes in the posture of the body, is a point on which I am not informed.

I had always supposed, and so I fancy do most Christians, that the Jews regarded their synagogues with the deepest reverence, and look upon them as peculiarly sacred places. My surprise, then, will be easily conceived when on going into them, and that too on some of their most solemn occasions, I saw the congregation smiling, laughing, joking with each other, and carrying on conversation together, as if they had been in the market place. What made their irreverent conduct appear still more out of place, was the circumstance of each Jew

having his prayer-book in his hand all the while. There certainly was nothing in their outward aspect, which seemed in accordance with the demeanour which is naturally expected from those who have met for the solemn worship of the Almighty. It would pain me to entertain an uncharitable thought, far more so to utter an uncharitable word, respecting any body of my fellow-creatures ; but the conviction has forced itself upon my mind, on the various occasions on which I have been in the synagogue, that the Jews look upon the worship of Jehovah as consisting solely in their being present in the synagogue and in repeating certain parts of their form of service. I am afraid that the state of the heart is generally overlooked as an essential pre-requisite to acceptable worship.

The Jews have no instrumental music in their public worship. Neither have they, except on very rare occasions, and under particular circumstances, any addresses, or exhortations, or sermons. When there does happen to be anything of the kind, the discourse is

delivered by the presiding rabbi. A text is chosen in the same way as in Christian congregations. The Rev. D. Meldola, the presiding rabbi in the Spanish and Portuguese synagogue, in Bevis Marks, preached several sermons to his people in the course of last year. He himself was kind enough to show me one of these in manuscript; and as it has since been published I will give a short extract from it, illustrative of the character of a Jewish discourse. The text chosen as the ground of the sermon—which, judging from the length, must have occupied about half-an-hour in the delivery—was the well-known passage in Malachi: “But to you who fear my name, shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.” Throughout a great part of the sermon, a comparison is carried on between the divine law and the natural sun,—the Jews interpreting the expression “sun of righteousness,” not as pointing even to their own expected Messiah, but to the law of Moses. With this explanatory remark, I present my readers with the following extract from the discourse in question:—

“Between the sun and the Divine Law, I may here be allowed to institute a comparison. And first, let me observe, that as the effects of light are referred to the first fountain, which is the sun, so all the goodness that exists in the heart of man is produced through the instrumentality of the Divine Law. Again, if the sun be the most glorious of created substances which appear to the natural eye of man, the law is the most glorious of those which exist in heaven, or which are perceptible to our spiritual vision. With good reason then, may we compare the law to the sun, for we find in both the same attributes and the same circumstances; the break of day (aurora) precedes the sun in his rising forth above the horizon to adorn the earth with the splendour of his rays, and to warm with congenial heat the productions of its surface; so other minor laws preceded the law of Moses, which was the sun to those auroræ. Adam had the precepts called the laws of Noachidæ—Abraham, the circumcision, &c., and all these were forerunners and preludes, just as the aurora is to the sun, to the great and in-

comparable sun of the law, which had to appear in the horizon of Mount Sinai to illuminate a world involved in the darkness of the most abominable and detestable idolatries, amidst which our forefathers had forgotten their Creator; for thus saith the Lord concerning Israel, 'Cast ye away every man the abomination of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.' The body of the sun does not deviate any distance from the tropics, although its light reaches unto the extremity of the poles; so the body of the law never departs from the people of Israel, although its light reaches to the most distant nations; all nations and kindreds most unequivocally confess and regard it as truth, they venerate it as holy, and adore it as celestial. The sun warms with his beneficial beams the nearest, while the more remote are placed beyond the reach of his more powerful heat; in like manner the holy law of God enlivens with divine zeal, and warms with divine love those who bask under its beams, while those who remain at a distance from it are deprived of its genial influ-

ences. The light of the sun although at times obscured by an eclipse, is never entirely extinguished: mankind in such a case are the sufferers, as they do not enjoy his brightness. In like manner the law, although concealed in part from us because of our transgressions (as even during our captivity a part may not be rightly observed or understood by us), yet we are not on this account to suppose that in any one point is it shorn of its grandeur, or diminished in its light; for 'The law of the Lord is perfect.'"

I have given this extract at so great a length, as it is probable very few, if any, of those into whose hands this work may come, have had an opportunity of forming an idea of the nature of a Jewish sermon.

The services of the Jews usually last for about an hour on week days. On their Sabbath morning, which is our Friday evening, it lasts rather longer. On several of their great occasions, the services last for twelve consecutive hours. On the day of Atonement, or Black Fast, they remain in the synagogue for six hours, during all of which time they lie on the ground with

their shoes off. This Black Fast is the most mournful of all their observances. Perhaps nothing more affecting was ever known on earth, than to see a whole congregation lying barefooted on the floor of the synagogue, and chaunting with united voices, in their own most touching manner, acknowledgments of their great and grievous sins against God. The effect of the whole is greatly heightened by the darkness which reigns in the place. While on other occasions, after sunset, there are always about 300 wax candles (tallow being deemed polluted) in the synagogue, which give it a brilliant appearance,—on this night there are only twelve. On the day of Atonement, the Jews believe that all their sins are forgiven, and that they commence life anew in a state of perfect justification. Every one must perceive in this article of Jewish faith, the source of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the priest's power to pardon sin.

I was very much struck when in the synagogue, with the great similarity there exists between the Church of England Common Prayer-Book, and that used by the Jews. Many indeed of

the most beautiful parts of the Episcopal ritual are manifestly borrowed from the Jewish service. Even the very expressions are in some instances the same.

The duties of the rabbies are not very arduous or varied. They are simply to expound the law in any cases of difficulty that may occur. If a doubt, for example, were to start up in the mind of any of the congregation, whether it would be lawful to partake of a particular dish, not expressly forbidden by the law of Moses, but which might impliedly be prohibited, the party goes at once and consults the rabbi ; and whatever decision he gives, is implicitly acted on.

In connexion with the authority which the rabbies exercise in the Jewish community, it may be right to mention, that a very large proportion of the Jewish observances are of rabbinical and not of Mosaic origin. The Jews, as a nation, are exceedingly credulous ; and the authority of the Talmud, notwithstanding its manifest and manifold absurdities, is regarded by them with the deepest reverence.

The Jews have five great occasions in the

course of the year ; but I shall only advert to the three principal ones. The first is their New Year, which commences with the new moon ; generally in our September. Ten days after is the Day of Atonement. This is the greatest day of all. By some it is called the Black Fast, as mentioned in a previous part of the chapter, where I have alluded to its nature. In eight days afterwards the Feast of Tabernacles commences, which lasts eight days ; but the two first and two last days only, are observed with strictness. On the first two, after quitting the synagogue, the congregation retire to a wooden erection, called the tabernacle, where they partake of the feast. I was present, as before observed, at the one held about three weeks ago, having been taken by one of the rabbies, contrary to their usual practice in the case of strangers, to witness the ceremony. The only indispensable things at this feast are, that the roof of the tabernacle be hung inside with flowers and evergreens ; that the parties have something to eat ; and that they drink a little wine. Small sweetmeats from a confectioner's shop, with

apples, pears, and other green fruit, were the only eatables I observed on the table. Those who are able, pay for this feast; those who are not, have it furnished to them gratuitously by the congregation.

Many of the more opulent Jews erect tabernacles of their own, either on the tops of their houses or in some adjoining yard, and invite their friends to partake of the feast. The tabernacles must not be less than ten feet in length, and eight in breadth. The other great occasion is the Passover, which occurs a little before our Easter. Like the feast of tabernacles, the Passover lasts eight days, but only the two first and two last are particularly observed. As I have referred to this solemnity in my observations on the religious observances of the Jews in their own houses, I need not revert to it again, farther than to mention that, during the whole of the eight days, the Jew is not on any account to partake of leavened bread, or to suffer it to be in his house. Hence on the eve of the festival, every house is searched with the greatest care lest any fragment of ordinary

bread should be found lurking in some corner of it.

The Pentateuch is read over from beginning to end on Sabbath-days, once every year. For this purpose it is divided into fifty-four parts, the Jewish year occasionally containing that number of Sabbaths. One of these parts is read every Sabbath, and when the year only contains fifty-two Sabbaths, two parts are read on each of the last two Sabbaths.

In the Jewish prayer-book used at all the synagogues, and of which there is an English translation, I have not been able to discover a single allusion to the Messiah. In fact, though the great distinctive feature of their religion be their faith in a Messiah to come, some of themselves have mentioned to me, that not knowing when Messiah will come, they very rarely allude to him.

The Jews have no idea of the doctrine of a vicarious atonement in any form or shape. They offer no sacrifices for their sins, as their forefathers did; because they do not believe they would be acceptable in consequence of

their living in a strange land. They do not expect that their Messiah, when he does come, will do anything for them with the exception of restoring them to Jerusalem, and there presiding over them in the character of a temporal prince. They do not, even in the most modified sense, invest him with the attributes of Deity. Of the doctrine of regeneration, or the spiritual transformation of character, they have not the slightest notion. They believe that they will be saved solely by repentance, by the rigid observance of their religious ceremonies, and by the performance of acts of charity and mercy. They not only do not believe in the personality of the Holy Spirit—as might indeed be inferred from the fact of their not regarding their own expected Messiah in the light of a divine person—but they have no idea of spiritual influences of any kind. Of all the distinctive doctrines of the Gospel, they are indeed entirely ignorant. And here I do not speak of their laity only, but of their priesthood also. I have conversed with some of their priests on the leading doctrines of Christianity, and have had the greatest difficulty in

getting them to understand what those doctrines are. Evangelical religion is a phrase with the import of which they are wholly unacquainted. To speak to them of the work of grace in the soul, would be the same as if you were addressing them in an unknown tongue.

Of the doctrinal differences which exist between Calvinists and Arminians, Trinitarians and Socinians, they know nothing. Of course, they are equally ignorant of the diversities of opinion which prevail among Christians in matters of church government.

The Jewish rabbies are self-elected. They ordain any man they deem most learned, and otherwise most competent for the office, and then command the congregations to respect them as masters in Israel, on pain of excommunication. This excommunication, or rather cutting off, is seldom resorted to. A man must be a frightful criminal, indeed, who incurs that penalty for his moral offences. It does not consist in denying the offender any present privileges, but in his not receiving the same attention as others at his death, and in being interred

“without the boards;” that is, in the part of their burial ground appropriated for the interment of all who have lived dissolute and disgraceful lives. Of this fate, after death, the Jew has a most awful horror.

The Jewish mode of supporting their rabbies, their priests, and their public worship, involves a sort of union of the compulsory and voluntary systems. All of them—I mean of course the strict Jews—volunteer to pay for their seats in the synagogue; but what the amount is to be does not depend on themselves, but on a class of persons called assessors. These value the different sittings; and the price put upon them varies with the supposed circumstances of the parties. If any one thinks that his seat has been assessed at a higher rate than his circumstances justify, he has only to make a representation to that effect to the assessors, and to satisfy them that his representation is correct, to obtain a deduction from the sum at which his sitting is assessed. Jews who do not enter the synagogue above four or five times a year, pay as much as those who attend it regularly.

Before I ascertained how the fact really stood, I was curious to know whether, supposing any one who had been brought up in the belief of Christianity, were by some means or other led to abjure the Christian system and embrace Judaism, there would be any possibility of his being received into the Jewish church. I find there is not: the door of Judaism would be barred against him. Connected with this point, another question has repeatedly occurred to my mind—namely, whether there be any instance of a person renouncing Christianity and wishing to become a member of the Jewish church? I have ascertained that there is one such case, and only one, so far as my information goes. The instance to which I refer is that of a man of great literary attainments and whose name is quite familiar to the public ear and eye. The first indication this individual—who was brought up I believe in the established church, at all events as a Protestant—gave of his wavering faith in his own denomination, was by marrying, some years ago, a young Quakeress. His relinquishment of denomi-

national differences, was soon followed by his renouncement of Christianity altogether. Whether he subsequently sought refuge, but found none in Deism or Atheism, I have not been able to ascertain; but be this as it may, he eventually became a proselyte to the Jewish religion, and has done everything he could to obtain admission within its pale. For years he has, every Saturday (the Jewish Sabbath), attended one of their synagogues in the east end, and is most attentive in the performance of all the religious duties of Judaism, so far as he is permitted to engage in them.

But though no male Gentile can ever be received into the Jewish church, a female Gentile can; not indeed in London, but in Germany and other parts of the Continent, and when received as proselytes abroad they are admitted into communion with the Jews in this country. There is, however, only one way in which this can be done, and that is by marrying a Jew. An instance of this occurred some years ago. The parties went to Germany, where the female Gentile was married to a Jew, and was received at

once into the communion of the Jewish church. After remaining in Germany for some months, they returned to London, where the new proselyte was received with open arms. They have now a family of several children, which are duly recognised as the legitimate seed of Abraham. The children of a Jewess married to a Gentile, I ought to mention, are not acknowledged as Jewish progeny.

A woman does not possess the same importance among the Jews, nor is she regarded with the same respect, as a woman is among us. Let me not be here misunderstood. I do not mean that Jews are not as attached to their wives and treat them at home with as much kindness, as Christians do their wives: I only refer to the Jewish opinion of females in reference to religious matters. A Jewess is not allowed to sit in the area of the synagogue: that is appropriated entirely to the men. The females have sittings assigned them in the galleries; and a thick high railing is, in most of the synagogues, erected along the front of the gallery to prevent their seeing very distinctly that part in which the males are wor-

shipping. In fact, the Jewesses, when in synagogue, have the appearance of so many persons in a species of prison. But what will surprise the reader most of all in the Jewish estimation of women, will be this, that no Jewess is allowed to take any visible part in divine worship. Their voices must not be heard in the synagogue ; they are supposed to be there simply in the character of spectators. The question, indeed, has been mooted by the rabbies, whether a woman has a soul ; but the general conclusion come to on the point, has been in the affirmative.

The Jew spends immeasurably more of his time and his money on his religion, than we Christians do on ours. His liberality in money is perhaps twice as great ; while instead of our fifty-two days (Sundays) in the year, his religion, taking his Sabbaths and ours together, and adding to them twenty-one days for his fasts and festivals, occupies at least 125 out of the 365 days of the year.

Many erroneous notions prevail as to the dispositions of the Jews. They are generally supposed, because the public happens to hear

more of the conduct of the worst than of the better class among them, to be a people of selfish feelings, and to look upon Christians with an unkindly if not malignant eye. This is the opposite of the fact. A great many of their number, in the intensity of their desire to make money, are constantly on the watch for opportunities of cheating those who are not of their own community; but beyond this, the Christian world has no reason to complain of them. The more respectable portion of their body are of obliging disposition and kindly feeling. They are also an hospitable people; though the intercourse between them and the rest of the community is not sufficiently extensive to admit of frequent exhibitions of their feelings in this respect. To their own poor, as previously remarked, they are exceedingly kind. The highest among them regard the lowest with a truly brotherly affection. The fraternal feeling which prompted Sir Moses Montefiore to incur the expense and inconvenience of his recent personal visit to Syria, to secure the future protection of the persecuted Jews in that country,

was not a feeling peculiar to himself. It was shared by many of his brethren in London ; only very few, if any of their number, had the same means at their disposal, and the personal influence requisite to hold out a prospect of success in a similar mission—had it been undertaken by them. The provision which the richer Jews make for the wants of their poor brethren is so ample, compared with what we make for our poor, that it may well put us to the blush.

The Jewish charitable institutions are so numerous as to embrace every conceivable form which misery can assume. Will not the Christian reader be surprised when I tell him, that in London alone there are upwards of fifty benevolent and charitable Jewish institutions ? In addition to the contributions made to these institutions, there is a great deal of private charity among the body. In fact, charitable assistance is so much a matter of course among them, that a stranger Jew coming from other countries, and having spent all his money, applies to his brethren in London, and almost claims relief, as if it were a matter of legal right. What

cause, then, for wonder that a Jew is never to be seen by Christians in the capacity of a mendicant, and that none of them ever find their way into the workhouse?

The Jews of London have eight synagogues. The first erected was the Spanish and Portuguese synagogue, in Bevis Marks, of which the Rev. D. Meldola is the presiding rabbi. It was built when the Jews first came in considerable numbers to this country, during the Protectorate of Cromwell. The other synagogues belong to the German and Polish Jews. The number of Jews necessary to form a congregation, is ten.

Efforts have been made by the Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews, to convert the Israelites of London; but these efforts have proved a decided failure. Even the professed conversions have not exceeded seven or eight a-year; and the real conversions, it is to be feared, have been still fewer. And yet, from first to last, upwards of 150,000*l.* have, in one shape or other, been expended in the attempt to convert the London Jews.

In conclusion, I cannot refrain from express-

ing report that the Jews should be generally reported by the Christian world with feelings of intolerance. We should remember that in them we see all that remains of this world, and therefore in with the hope of a blessed immortality in the next—that they were for a long succession of centuries the chosen people of God, and the sole repositories of revealed truth—that to them we are indebted for the preservation, in all their original purity, of the Old Testament Scriptures—and that Jesus himself, the Saviour in whom we trust, was born of Jewish parents and brought up in the Jewish faith. If the Christians of England are to be privileged to have a hand in the conversion of the Jews, they can only expect to be made instrumental towards that great and glorious consummation, by ceasing to treat them with contempt and learning to regard them with kindness and compassion.

NOTE.—After the last sentence of this work had been put in type, and just at the very moment the concluding sheet was going to press, I

received information of a most important fact which has not yet been brought before the public. I allude to the circumstance of a great number of Jews having just seceded from the general body, in consequence of the latter placing the rabbinical writings on the same footing as the five books of Moses,—just as the Roman Catholics and Puseyites regard the traditions of the Fathers as of equal authority with the Scriptures. These seceders, at the head of whom is Sir Isaac Lyons Goldsmid, one of the most influential individuals in the Jewish community, denounce the Talmud as a mass of outrageous absurdities, and are to adhere exclusively to the authority of Moses in all religious matters. It is impossible to over estimate the importance of this event. It cannot fail to shake the Jewish system to its very centre; for the recognition of the rabbinical writings as of equal authority with the Pentateuch, has been the great source of all the superstition which exists among the body. There is a remarkable resemblance between this movement and that made by Luther and the other Reformers in the six-

teenth century, to emancipate the nations of Europe from the thralldom in which they were held by the Romish priesthood. The movement is the more important, inasmuch as it is the first division which has ever taken place among the Jews, on any of the essentials of their religion. It cannot fail to produce speedy as well as most momentous results. It has already inspired the body generally with the deepest alarm ; but on that point I forbear to dwell. These Jewish Dissenters have taken the place in Burton Street, formerly occupied by the Owenites, which they have converted into a synagogue, where they now worship Jehovah in accordance with their newly-acquired lights, under the designation of "The Reformed Jews." The designation they have chosen is of itself of very significant import. Who knows but this may be the first step which Providence means to take for paving the way for the conversion of the Jews.

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